THE NOVELS OF SCOTT FITZGERALD: A STUDY OF THEME AND VISION

THESIS FOR Ph. D.
IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH (INDIA)
1995

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AND
MODERN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH-202002 INDIA

Dated: May 04, 1995

This is to certify that Mrs. Attia Abid has completed her Ph.D. thesis on " **The Novels of Scott Fitzgerald: A Study of Theme and Vision** " under my supervision. Mrs. Abid's thesis is satisfactory and original work based on her study of the subject.

A. Tariq

Professor A. Tariq

(Supervisor)

C O N T E N T S

P R E F A C E

PREFACE

We Indians take up an assignment with the blessings of our parents, teachers and elders; on completing it, we again seek their blessings and express our earnest gratitude. I am no exception. However, during the course of my work, I met some people who turned out to be well-wishers, friends and even angels in disguise. From the vantage point of achievement, when I look back nostalgically, I miss many "familiar faces", and reminiscence with Charles Lamb:

> How some they have died, and some they have
> left me,
> And some are taken from me; all are departed;
> All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

On the other hand, I also cherish those who are by my side, and I thank God Almighty for their companionship. My mother, brother, sister, husband, children and family members gave me all the co-operation and encouragement needed; they couldn't have done more. The irony is that I can't thank them; for how does one thank ones very one? I can just say that my achievement is actually theirs; they deserve the laurels.

I am extremely fortunate that even twenty-five years after my Masters, I have the benediction of two Professors that taught me way back in 1970, and in 1994 brought me from darkness to light. I refer to Professor Azizuddin Tariq and Professor Maqbool Hasan Khan. Professor Azizuddin Tariq, former Chairman, Department of English, was also my Supervisor for M.Phil., and, during the course of my Ph.D., he retired, but inspite of that he continued to give me as much time as before. His guidance, encouragement and co-operation are invaluable. I will not even attempt to express my gratitude because no words are there that can convey my feelings. He has lived upto the adage that a 'guru' is a friend, philosopher and guide. Professor Maqbool Hasan Khan, Chairman, Department of English, gave me unflinching support; he was like a ballast during hours of uncertainty and doubt. I can never forget the help and encouragement extended not only by him but by Afsar Apa also. If one is lucky to have such teachers as Professor Azizuddin Tariq and Professor Maqbool Hasan Khan, one's faith in the profession remains unshaken. They are role models, and I am proud to simply state that I have been their student.

There are some other teachers that I must also mention because on every occasion they have found opportunities to boost my morale. I remember with respect and affection Professor Jafar Zaki, former Chairman, Department of

English, and Ms Shahnaz Hashmi. Professor Zakia Siddiqui, Principal, Women's College, has been a source of strength and inspiration; her faith and confidence have made a world of difference.

In the Slough of Despondency, one of the helping hands was Mrs Najma Akhtar, former Controller of Admissions and Examinations. Her support and encouragement, by word and deed, opened 'magic casements' for me. Words would be a mere apology for my sentiments.

Had it not been for ASRC, Hyderabad and The American Centre, Delhi, I could not have achieved anything. Their co-operation and efficiency have helped me sign off in time. I am obliged and grateful to them. I remain indebted to Mr. Moinuddin Alvi, Blessing Computer Centre, who so patiently and deligently transcribed my scrawl onto the Computer.

An American student of mine once gave me a plaque with the following words inscribed on it:

Thanks is such a little word _____
no bigger than a minute,
But there's a world of meaning
and appreciation in it.

On this momentous occasion I extend the same to all the aforementioned "personalities" and "personages" with a simple word coming from the deepest recesses of my heart ---- THANKS. I hope it will not seem presumptuous to say that I can offer nothing except a prayer for each and everyone ---- May God bless them all with His choicest blessings.

Tennyson rightly said:

> Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
> Gleams that untravell'd world,
> whose margin fades
> Forever and forever when I move.

Completion of Ph.D. is just stepping into the sea of knowledge; its just the beginning. Had my father been in our midst today, he would have quoted Robert Frost:

> The woods are lovely, dark and deep;
> But I have promises to keep;
> And miles to go before I sleep,
> And miles to go before I sleep.

THE NOVELS OF SCOTT FITZGERALD:

A STUDY OF THEME AND VISION

CHAPTER I

THE AGE, THE GENRE, THE ARTIST

O life unlike to ours!
Who fluctuates idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives,
Who wait like thee, but not like thee in hope.
(Mathew Arnold)

CHAPTER I

The Age, The Genre, The Artist

Background of the Age

> On one side lies America predominantly agricultural concerned with domestic problems; conforming intellectually at-least, to the political, economic, moral principles inherited from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.... On the other side lies the Modern America, predominantly urban and industrial, inextricably involved in a world economy and politics, troubled with the problems that had long been thought peculiar to the old world; experiencing profound changes in population, social institutions and technology trying to accommodate its traditional institutions and habits of thoughts to conditions new and in part alien.[1]

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1. Henry Steele Commanger, The American Mind (New Haven, 1950), p.41.

The world of the nineteenth century, filled with change, teeming with developments, was bent on upsetting the fundamental nature of the social order itself. As the century entered its last two decades, a fundamentally utopian vision took hold of the American imagination and a mythic view of some distant future engaged the mind which was preoccupied with the legend of the "second chance" crystallised in the Civil War.

What makes America unique is the quality of its typical institutions and character shaped by the Frontier which remained inexhaustible since the possible search for the vanquished geographical frontier became a viable ideological force in the twentieth century. There were drastic and far-reaching socio-economic changes personified in "Big Business", and at the turn of the century, America emerged as the materialistic business civilization. However, the American attitude to wealth is said to be different from that of the Europeans. George Santyana says:

> The American talks about money because it is the symbol and measure he has at hand for success, intelligence and power; but as to money itself, he makes,

> loses, spends and gives it away with a very light heart.[2]

Thus, it was not important in itself but it could perfect individual and social morality. It is perhaps for this reason that they dislike the idle rich, in whose hands, shorn of its philanthropic ends, money becomes tainted with acquisitiveness; they are "the malefactors of great wealth". America lost its innocence yielding to experience and enhanced adult responsibilities; as Henry May said, "our times had been separated from a completely vanished world".[3] Not only that, there was a discontinuity between a remoter and more recent past:

> At some point, if not an instantaneous upheaval, there must have been a notable quickening of the pace of change, a period when things began to move so fast that the past, from then on, looked static.[4]

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2. George Santayana, Character and Opinion in the United States (New York, 1956), p.115.

3. Henry F. May, The End of American Innocence (New York, 1959), p.ix.

4. Ibid., p.303.

A cultural revolution was imminent, and it accompanied the intellectual and social discontent that exploded in the 1890s and reverberated till the 1940s. However, World War I acted as a further catalyst and America got involved in all the realities that she had sought to avoid; she was torn from that security in which her domestic life was determined by self interest and political expediency; and became "not only mechanised and urbanised and bureaucratised, but internationalised as well."[5]

Another factor responsible for internationalisation was immigration:

> While the relatively homogeneous American culture of the mid-nineteenth century was, like all other national cultures of that period seriously affected by the rise of modern industry.... mass immigration added something additional to the destructive impact. The break between cultures of the 1870s and that of the 1920s was thus greater in the United States than it was in England or France.[6]

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5. Richard Hofstader, The Age of Reform (New York, 1955), p.326.

Different institutional forms were shaped by this new phenomenon; the entire economic order catapulted America into a nation of potential entrepreneurs with a new social and ethical outlook; the "new economic man" was moulded as a major social type out of the fusion of capitalism and liberalism. The old world and culture were naturally overtaken by the emerging socio-economic order ushering in a new era; values and ideals too underwent a change, and American culture was polarised.

What remained was nostalgia for the golden age and a yearning for the innocence and promise that had been blown away by the winds of change. America looked to Europe as a symbol of its past. However, America had chosen its "manifest destiny", and what the Europeans could only dream and romanticise, America had actualised. American civilization was given a new orientation which continued and shaped America of the twentieth century. In this period of cultural transition mythopoesis of the past became an artistic necessity, and the artists were compelled to reorganise and reassert values that had crumbled in the aftermath of War. The relationship of the artist and society had been dislocated, and a distraught generation was drifting with the current towards fragmentation and chaos.

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6. Nathan Glazer, "The Immigrant Groups and American Culture", Yale Review, XLVIII (Spring, 1959), p.392.

The artist and intellectual had to stabilize the situation and restore confidence in secure traditional moral values. For this they looked to the past with new and meaningful insights; though it could not entirely obliterate the dismal, bleak prospects, it was the "greatest well of inspiration.... greatest hope of freedom." Thus, as the present dissipated into meaningless, self-invalidating reality, the past became hallowed and was raised to mythic proportions.

Though the certainty, and the close identification of this idea with a total moral awakening had gradually receded, progress as an article of faith did not perish and continued in a fundamentally agrarian pattern of life till the last quarter of the nineteenth century. When industrialism impinged itself with an impact that seemed to open "vistas of progress" while simultaneously revealing "the spectres of inescapable problems lurking backstage making a way of life evaporate abruptly. The material forces that were transforming America had propelled the placid social stability of the pre-war era into confusions and complexities inherent in industrialism and urbanism, so it was not just the war that obliterated ideas though ofcourse it can be called a sharp and harsh beginning. The framework of the American society set by the Civil War and Reconstruction was based on the dynamics of economic growth

and revolutionary progress, and continued permitting unrestrained exploitation and degradation of the masses depriving them of their legitimate economic and social heritage. This agrarian hostility to industrial capitalism and ignoble economic motive of the big businessmen created:

> a set of avaricious rascals who habitually cheated and robbed investors and consumers, corrupted government, fought ruthlessly among themselves, and in general carried on predatory activities comparable to those of the robber barons of medieval Europe.[7]

The businessman became the power symbol wielding the might of the large corporation even though he had no place among the existing institutions or sanction for it in the hierarchy of traditional American values. The businessman - millionaire was given a niche in the American Senate enhancing his political prestige and power so that David Graham Phillip dubbed that august body as the "Rich Man's Club" and "House of Dollars." Monopolistic business became the sign of progressive economic maturity and was more to prevent disastrous competition than to plunder; Andrew

7. Hal Bridges, "The Robber Baron Concept in American History", Business History Review, XXXIII (Spring 1958), p.1.

Carnagie contended that "objections to the foundations upon which society is based are not in order because the condition of the race is better with these than any other which has been tried."[8] William Graham Summer maintained that the phenomenon of growth should be a reason for congratulation rather than alarm. This classical economics that justified untrammeled pursuit of self interest as the highest means of attaining social good was an outgrowth of the English commercial and industrial revolutions. The advance of progress and poverty was paradoxical and simultaneous; as liveried carriages appeared so did barefooted children:

> Where population is densest, wealth greatest, and the machinery of production and exchange most highly developed --- we find the deepest poverty, the sharpest struggle for existence, and the most enforced idleness.[9]

Movements were initiated to curb the momentum and pervasiveness of corporate wealth so that an altruistic

8. Andrew Carnagie, "Wealth", North American Review, 168 (June, 1989), p.654.

9. Henry George, Progress and Poverty (San Francisco, 1879), p.6.

society could be formed. Henry Lloyd and others, in the muckraking journalism, exposed corruption in business monopolies and rapacious practices of industrial organisations relegating their social responsibilities. The ruthlessness, injustice, inhumanity and crass materialistic barbarism displayed by the titans of wealth was unravelled. Government control and socialisation of wealth were remedies suggested in the national interest which would have the best minds formulate plans for positive government action, resuscitating democratic traditions.

The city was the point of concentration for much of the explosive energy unleashed during this period. It was the new symbol of the dramatic emergence of modern America. The city was not only the complex of social and moral disaster but was also symbolic of the breakdown of community institutions, as also of the passing away of the older American world of grace and charm, of virtue and dignity. The new urban culture had vitality and excitement of change. It created a fresh sense of optimism and energy for economic prosperity and contentment. Though it could not be the substitute for the many problems and complexities of urban existence in the cities of "dreadful night", its most significant impact was the revolution in traditional American customs, mores and manners, a status revolution in which the prime dynamic force was fear and resentment of the

old established aristocracy of business and profession against upheaval in their status, and not as much of economic deprivation. They saw themselves shorn of their traditional wealth and power by the new rich, the social parvenu creating disruption in the well-entrenched social norms and values. The new status and new desire meant a rejection of the traditional social pattern which seemed inevitable. The new frontiers of opportunity created a new climate of materialism and moral cynicism, and a new breed of men with vaulting ambition for power:

> The acquisition of wealth had ceased to interest old aristocracy. The new men were a tougher breed; their goal was not money, but power. To suppose that they worshipped money was a delusion. They respected money less than Europeans did; wasted it more relentlessly, endured its loss more easily. Like social position it was merely a symbol, an index of power. In terms of money their stakes were fantastically high, higher than ever before played for. The pursuit of power absorbed them completely.[10]

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10. Lloyd Morris, Postscript to Yesterday (New York, 1947), p.8.

The American society had always deemed money having an end other than itself. Its concept of money had an ethical and pious Protestant sanction:

> The love of money is the root of all evil. He who tries to attain unto it too quickly, or dishonestly will fall into many snares, no doubt about that. The love of money. What is that? It is making an idol of money, and idolatory pure and simple everywhere is condemned by the Holy Scripture and by man's commonsense. The man that worships the dollar instead of thinking of the purposes for which it ought to be used, the man who idolises simply money, the miser that hoards his money in the cellar, or hides it in his stocking, or refuses to invest it where it will do the world good, that man hugs it until the eagle squeals, has in him the root of all evil.[11]

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11. Russel Conwell, Acres of Diamond (New York, 1905), pp.25-26.

Henry James, the indefatigable observer of the social scene never questioned the American ideal though he was critical of luxury, privilege and actual abuses of money and leisure. He dreamt of an aristocracy of talents and money wherein were reconciled two opposing American ideals. However, though Industrial America had produced great wealth and undreamed prosperity there was:

> a constant dialectic between innocence and guilt, hope and disenchantment, love and work, expansiveness and recoil. One side is the American Dream, the other ... not quite a Nightmare.[12]

The progressive intellectuals revolted and made efforts to articulate the modern version of an older, lost and distanced dream of America, reactivated political sensitivities through its inquiring, critical spirit and adopted principles of positive and social democracy directed back to their primitive ideal. They committed themselves to a new age that they did not comprehend. However, progressivism finally:

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12. Ihab Hasan, Radical Innocence (Princeton, N.J. 1961), p.35.

> emerged as a redemptive element in the American democracy, and banded together in crusades to transform an individualistic and competitive society into something approximating a welfare state.[13]

The War and its aftermath virtually destroyed the humanistic, cosmopolitan spirit of the pre-1914 era. With it was destroyed the traditional American confidence of assimilating people of diverse ethnic and cultural origins into a national cohesion. The war paradoxically brought an era of isolation: internal because of prejudice that led to racial and social conflagration, and external since America became completely cut off from any participation in its international obligations. The break with the past seemed inevitable even without the war because already the permeating socio-economic conditions brought about a sharp cleavage in the traditional American values and assumptions. The war simply helped to complete the process of disintegration:

> It destroyed faith in progress.... It made clear to perceptive thinkers that they had misread the progressive era and the long Victorian reign of peace, the

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13. Arthur S. Link, American Epoch (New York, 1967), p.72.

> violence prowled underneath man's apparent harmony and rationality.[14]

Out of the post-war upheaval was emerging a New Era and a new civilization soon to plunge into a deplorable interlude of reaction and disintegration. The war did force into open the invalidation of old ideals as having no relevance to contemporary reality. The sanctified values of an earlier age had lost their significance. The culture, resultant upon these values had become bankrupt. This was the past that the generation of the Twenties felt to have been cheated by. The war generation had become cynical, and disillusioned, but not revolutionary. It no longer believed in great causes nor could it exhaust its emotions on the outbreak of moral indignation. But it did seem alienated from the prevailing order for the whole generation was in a state of nervous stimulation not unlike the big cities behind the lines of war. Maxwell Geismar said:

> The year 1919 was a breaking point in American life. It marked the end of an epoch of social reform which had sprung from the Populist and Progressive Movement at the turn of the century. It

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14. William E. Leuchtenberg, The Perils of Prosperity (Chicago, 1959), p.142.

> opened a decade of social anarchy under the mark of normalcy -- of pleasure-seeking and private gain, of material success and trivial moral values.[15]

No doubt the break was disruptive, and it was normal for the generation tired of the failing idealism of war to plunge headlong into profligacy and self indulgence. Warren Harding defined the mood of his generation in a speech in May, 1920:

> America's present need is not heroics, but healing; not nostrums, but normalcy; not revolution, but restoration; not agitation, but adjustment; not surgery, but serenity; not the dramatic, but the dispassionate; not experiment, but equipoise; not submergence in internationality, but sustainment in triumphant nationality.[16]

Thus, inspite of the booming prosperity and economic gains, the mood of the Twenties was one of disenchantment and articulate discontent. The changes were so drastic that it often seemed to violate the sense of decency and decorum to

15. Maxwell Geismar, American Moderns: From Rebellion to Conformity (New York, 1958), p.68.

16. Quoted, Richard Current et al, American History (New York, 1965), p.681.

a generation accustomed to a way of life governed by Christian ethical precepts. What replaced these values was a deliberate hedonistic pleasure seeking, blind cynicism and crass materialism.

The traditional America had been made to lose its identity in the mores and morals of a metropolitan culture. The shackles of American materialism had become so hardened that old puritan, ethical concepts had almost become obsolete or failed to get assimilated into the new social order. The structure of this new mechanised society had become impervious to frontier optimism and individualism. The sense of loss, of novelty and variety of life of old America was typified in the mood of nostalgia evoked in such an image as Lindberg's flight across the Atlantic which expressed a longing for a way of life free from urban uniformity and institutionalisation. It seemed significant that while Europe had collapsed as a centre of stability and become a centre of disorder, America was moving inexorably towards an immense all-pervading disillusionment. An important dominant feature of the Twenties was the extensive mythicising of various modes of thought and behaviour. The myth of the Jazz Age found its appropriate expression in American indulgences and ballyhoos, orgies of irresponsible dissipation and iconoclasm, savage destruction of past tradition and inordinate freedom from social and moral restraints

unleashed by the war. According to Robert W. Nash it was indeed "a nervous generation", cynical and alienated. In terms of cultural reorientation the American Twenties have been variously described as the "Roaring Twenties", the "New Business Epoch", The "Age of Leisure", the "Great Spree", The "Era of Wonderful Nonsense", the "Age of the Flapper", the "Dry Decade", the "Lawless Times", The "Jazz Age", all connoting different aspects of its excessive materialism, wild frantic, youthful abandon, social and moral orders, and its indulgence in strange fads and fashions. The era of the "Big Change" was spurred by a dramatic surge of unprecedented affluence and in turn a profound cultural transformation and social stress when the contours of contemporary America emerged clearly, the revolutionised newer modes of living which threatened to end regional, local and ethnic diversity.

The American mass society and metropolitan culture emerging simultaneously, spread their tentacles into the rural backwaters destroying its traditional isolation and tearing apart old values and pieties that had flourished in the agrarian society and were now being threatened by forces of modernism and replaced by new moral standards and attitudes that challenged and transformed time-sanctioned social cohesiveness. It imposed novel, unfamiliar patterns of inter-personal relationships and new cultural codes and

directions that were reshaping life and thought of urban America. Apparently, the rapidity and radicalism of social change implied a:

> rejection of all those nineteenth century values that culminated in the smoke of World War I. Idealism, progressivism, and communal concerns appear to have given way to materialistic cynicism, reaction, rugged individualism, xenophobia, and iconoclasm. A new zeitgeist was ushered in as old and tried moral issues were corroded by the "acids of modernity."[17]

The war certainly helped to intensity and crystallise the revolution against the old Puritan morality. With the bursting of pre-war idealism "Americans drifted toward some vague redefinition of self-identity, disillusioned and spiritually exhausted"[18] because underneath the superficial froth of irresponsible hedonism and blind cynicism ran currents of discontent deeper and more portentous. In the

17. Milton Plesur, The 1920's: Problems and Paradoxes (Boston, Mass., 1969), p.1.

18. Ronald L. Davis, ed. The Social Cultural Life of the 1920s (New York, 1972), p.1.

wake of ideological derailment and collapse of established values the intellectuals revolted against the puritanical, materialistic absolutism on American civilization, deploring its repressive insistence of conformity. They tried to explore the meaning of individual freedom and glorified such exotic romantic emotions and social patterns as ran counter to the repulsive unfeeling industrial America and its material, mechanical civilization. It was a revolt against the cold lethal simplicities of American business culture.

The most obvious manifestation of this social revolution was in the morals and manners which under pressure of war-time conditions, seemed quite indefensible. The historic Christian standards of morality, of idealised family relationship, premarital chastity and marital fidelity were eroded. The new attitude to sexuality made pleasure an integral part of the pursuit of happiness. With the breakdown of moral barriers under wartime excitement, new sexual freedom for women, the automobile extending the possibility of love-making beyond the sitting room, the widespread teaching of Freud's ideas on free expression of the libido, all led to the weakening of inhibitions and ubiquitous neurosis; Freud observed:

> A whole race going hedonistic, deciding on pleasure. The precocious intimacies

> of the younger generation would have come about with or without Prohibition.[19]

Another manifestation of changing mores was the rise of new forms of ballroom dancing, waltz, fox-trot, Charleston, jitter-bug which the Americans considered an evidence of the erosion of sexual mores. In 1931, Fredrick Lewis Allen thought it to be "impure, polluting, corrupting, debasing, destroying spirituality, increasing carnality", though the morals would survive inspite of the close embrace and frenzied rhythms of the new dances.

The continuing social revolution had a still deeper significance in the changed status of women that became possible with the increased expansion of economic opportunities which undermined male supremacy in an area in which the woman's role was traditionally subservient. With her economic and social emancipation, moral barriers crumbled and women began to demand equality with men. Smoking and drinking in public became her prerogatives to shed whatever crippling signs of feminity remained:

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19. F. Scott. Fitzgerald, "Echoes of the Jazz Age", The Crack Up, ed. Edmund Wilson (New York, 1956), p.15.

> The first casualty of feminine independence was the traditional dress that covered the neck and arms and assiduously hid the ankle from masculine view. The average skirt was about six inches from the ground in 1919. From this time on the ascent was spectacular, until the skirt had reached the knees or even above by 1927. At the same time women discarded their corsets and de-emphasised the upper reaches of their anatomy, usually with fearful results. Finally to complete the defeminisation women sheared their tresses and wore their hair straight and short. But there was no curious exception to this trend. The shorter the skirts and hair became the more women used cosmetics -- lipstick, rouge, and mascara. It seemed as if the face had become the last refuge of the feminity.[20]

The post-war hedonistic dissipation had led to a diffused and glamourised naturalistic attitude toward sex. The availability of leisure had stimulated sexual revolution

20. Arthur S. Link, American Epoch, p.274.

against "the absurdity of an 'outmoded and impractical' morality" which led to mass repression because "the absurd, exorbitant moral demands which society had made upon its victims had culminated in a national neurosis", and only a full, wholesome, primitive expression of natural impulses could restore sanity. The price of such irresponsible promiscuity was untrammeled freedom:

> The past-war woman said to the man "You are tired and disillusioned, you do not want the cares of a family or the companionship of mature wisdom, you want exciting play, you want the thrills of sex without their fruition, and I will give them to you." And to herself she added, "But I will be free."[21]

The woman was free and had energies and emotions to burn -- she had ripeness and readiness for revolution. She had Freudian libidinal gospel for an uninhibited sexual life. Then there was the automobile for distant "petting parties" which virtually offered an almost universally available means of escaping temporarily from the supervision of parents and chaperons or from the influence of neighbourhood opinion; Fredrick Lewis Allen calls it a "house of

21. Fredrick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday, p.109.

prostitution on wheels." The sex magazine and confessionals further aggravated the situation. One movie advertisement said:

> brilliant men, beautiful Jazz babies, champagne baths, midnight revels, petting parties in the purple dawn, all ending in one terrific smashing climax that makes you gasp.[22]

Perhaps the most charismatic and intriguing of decades, the Twenties were "the best of times, the worst of times", an age of acute incongruities and enigmas, cultural fragmentation and social dislocation. It was a collectivised society out to smother individual vision and feelings, paralysed by the shock of recognition of its spiritual loss and absence of moral and emotional moorings; a social and moral order virtually starved and spiritually vacuous. The contrast seemed stunningly unnerving seen from the vantage of an earlier age, and the hopes and faith it symbolised to the European mind; Anatole France told Waldo Frank:

> Make no mistake, Europe is a tale that has been told. Our long twilight is

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22. Ibid., p.261.

> before us. But I believe in your American dream.[23]

The youth was eager to desert the culture not because something was wrong with the culture as V.W. Brooks opines but because the rebellious youth hankered after what was imaginative, adventurous and artistically creative. The age had surrendered itself to something pernicious and it culminated in a final upsurge of demoralised apathy and disillusionment in the very moment of its immense outpouring of luxury born of material prosperity and the continuing debauching of the American dream and innocent expectations. And yet the despair of its fascination:

> It was an easy, quick, adventurous age, good to be young in; and yet coming out of it one felt a sense of relief, as on coming out of a room too full of talk and people into the sunlight of the winter streets.[24]

Then came the Great Crash. The economic disaster and financial panic shook the nation, depriving it of its customary exuberance, optimism and resilience of spirit. The

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23. Quoted, V.W. Brooks, The Days of the Phoenix (New York, 1957), p.23.

24. Malcolm Cowley, Exiles Return, p.309.

> The Twenties found the nation full of bouncing ebullience, fearful of nothing, and certain that in its commercial ingenuity it had found the philosopher's stone; the Thirties saw that bounce gone and the populace terrified as the businessman's supposed magic formula turned out to be only another disastrous experiment by a sorcerer's apprentice.[25]

If the Boom was a period of realignment of material values to social change, then the Crash was a period of readjustment to new economic realities. The jitters of Depression urged new hope and a new reckoning though the typical American normalcy had no hopes of bouncing back:

> The frustrated hopes that followed the War, the aching disillusionment of the hard-boiled era, oily scandals, its spiritual paralysis, the harshness of its gaiety; they would talk about the

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25. Rod W. Horton and Herbert W. Edwards, Backgrounds of American Literary Thought (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1974), p.300.

> good old days .... What was to come in the Nineteen Thirties?
> Only one thing could be sure of. It would not be repetition. The stream of time often doubles on its course, but always it makes for itself a new channel.[26]

The Depression was as shattering an experience as the War and plunged Americans into a frozen attitude of regret for the irrecoverable past. Rich Americans were reduced to destitution and despair; Will Rogers observed, "We are the first nation in the history of the world to go to the poor house in an automobile."[27]

The far-reaching social consequences were the loss of the earlier ebullient self-confidence, hopeful exuberance of imagination and experience, virtual rout of faith in progress, lack of gusto for bolstering up the sagging morale leading to social and moral stagnation. And added to all this was the fear of the gathering storm of World War II which crushed all idealism. The average American seemed "lost", and was beginning to realise that his country had

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26. Fredrick L. Allen, Only Yesterday, p.357.

27. Quoted, Paul Goodman and Frank Gatell, America in the Twenties, p.202.

travelled far from the America he had known in his youth, and that once embarked on a Titan's journey, "You can't go home again".

The American Social Novel (1900-1940)

The modern metropolitan commercial culture provided new literary impetus and excitement. The journalism of the Muckrakers found it an easy propagandist target. The imaginative literature too found the system of industrial capitalism and concentration of social and political power in business magnets a fascinating subject for creative exploration. The Utopian novelists like Winston Churchill, Upton Sinclair and others inspite of using disturbing social reality as an aspect of literary exploration, tended to share the very impressions and express the very sentiments and prejudices of the Muckrakers. No doubt, they are dated but they offered an interesting, fresh and poignant insight into the persistent frustrations and fantasies of the new urban, industrialised society and the historical transformation that victimised innocent people. Henry James visualised a business tycoon who would represent the actual experience of contemporary business life:

> An obscure but not less often an epic hero seamed all over with the wounds of the market and the dangers of the field,

> launched into action and passion by the intensity and complexity of the general struggle, a boundless ferocity of battle-driven above all by the extraordinary, the unique relation in which stands to the life of his lawful, his immitigable womankind.[28]

What caused popular reaction was the peculiar economic and social situation in which the middle-class found itself, and the intellectual and moral climate of the age with the significant clusters of prejudice that characterised the enlightened, progressive minds. Frank Norris diagnosed the need for "great strong harsh brutal men -- men with a purpose", the change makers who were tempered with the ethics of the social gospel, dedicated to the social good.

The progressive ambivalence would conceive a return or revulsion to certain elementary forms of common sense, of simple rural institutions of the past, something close to Howell's Utopia combining new, urban industrialism with a concern for human values by men who would be protective of morality and originators of progress in a new system of ethical socialism. The expanding industrial and commercial city became the creator of good life, a place of excitement

28. Henry James, The American (New York, 1876), p.101.

and extended opportunities for progress. Novelists like Theodore Dreiser did not consider the countryside to be a refuge from inclement natural environment, rather essentially inhospitable to man. Others found the city an answer to providing avenues of opportunity and work especially New York which held a childhood fascination for many. But to the majority of progressive reformers, the city remained a "devilsberg of crime", sucking into its corrupt vortex the simple and trusting young men from the Western farms, turning them into human robots like the machines they tend "hard, brutal strung with a crude, blind, strength, stupid and unreasoning." The big cities poisoned the springs of creative life and took away the very qualities that made him an American, the real American who could do something honest and valuable. This intense anti-urbanism tended to idealise the pioneer, agrarian past. The agrarian romanticism became a strong impulse because of urban alienation, a phenomenon which appeared with the "indigestible" alien the "undesirable foreign element" from Europe; as the immigrant tide welled stronger each year, the native spirit that had been so obviously a part of the mental complex increased in intensity. But, equally, the metropolis was disliked for its enormously excessive predatory wealth which was as much an enemy of civilization as exploitative poverty. Such great extremes of economic circumstances were a precondition of change from a rural

agrarian to urban commercial culture, also being responsible for the guilt complex in many minds.

The anti-materialist attitude of the prosperous middle-class was because of "a reduction less in income than in outlook." However, more than them, it was the elite of the older stock who suffered greatly the loss of economic prestige and social status. "The turbulent and revolutionary waves of the new industrialism and finance had washed up on such polished shores some exceedingly rough gravel."[29] The Rockfellers, Goulds and others had seized power as their ladies had laid siege to formal society being without restraints of culture, experience or even inherited pride of class or rank; they were called the "new barbarians" and supplanted the American patrician culture. The old world vanished and was soon forgotten; it was industrialism for individual avarice which was being descried, but not when it proved incidental to national progress. Great wealth had something corrosive about it since men were made to sacrifice their moral values to the over-riding considerations of material ambitions. The fiction of this era bears witness to this subsequent "sloughing off of morality." Yet in the less ordered, practical world the millionaire remained idle, vulgar,

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29. George E. Mowry, "The Progressive Profile", The American Past: Conflicting Interpretations of Great Issues, ed. Sidney Fine and Gerald S. Brown (New York, 1970), 259.

vicious, unredeemed, trapped by the very ethical norms which he employed to amass his colossal fortune. However, people began talking of a classless state, "Square Deal", "New Deal", "Fair Deal", all referring to the state being an arbiter of morally desirable distribution of wealth to socially desirable ends.

The realist impulse in American Literature was not simply an outgrowth of the commercial culture owing to changed economic and social conditions. It depended equally on "the actual broadening of taste and practice.... The breakdown of arbitrary and irrelevant barriers, the deepening capacity to express actual feeling.... The renewed openness to Europe and the major intellectual currents of the times."[30] The novel was an expression of a "rapidly growing, sprawling, changing, untidily society, in which the older forms of cultural pattern were disappearing."[31] It had operated on two extremes of literary culture, sensational gossip and social documentary truth, appropriate as an artistic mode to record the "direct impressions of life" and what would hold the imagination of the reader.

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30. Warner Barthoff, The Ferment of Realism (New York, 1965), p.47.

31. J.B. Priestley, Literature and Western Man (Lodon, 1960), p.223.

Thus the American novelists construed realism of entailing descriptions of social and human environment with its particular actuality of American connotations, a literary genre rooted in local colour which the American creative imagination desperately needed. American literary realism came into its own with Mark Twain (1835-1910), Henry James (1843-1916) and William Dean Howells (1837-1920) who in their own way grappled with the actuality of their own environment and reduced it to literary terms. In Henry James American metropolitan realism found its most articulate expression. The outward details of realism recreate the irresponsible world of the rich to point to the moral ugliness and violence perpeterated by them. Such a view of moneyed evil made him "The extremely critical champion of luxury and privileges." He indicted the rich for their careless irresponsibility although he did not question the aristocratic ideal sustained by great inherited fortunes.
Emily Zola was determined to go beyond the realism of Flaubert and Balzac, and expounded his theories of Naturalism in 1871. This became a dominant literary movement in America in the first two decades of the Twentieth Century. It intensified realism and insisted on dispelling superstitions and idealisation; there was the application of scientific objectivity to literary subjects with a closer observation of reality and inclusion of greater details. Prof. Lar Ahnebrink defines it in the following terms:

> Naturalism is a manner and method of composition by which the author portrays life as it is in accordance with the philosophical theory of determinism. In contrast to a realist, a naturalist believes that man is fundamentally an animal without free will. To a naturalist, man can be explained in terms of forces, usually hereditary and environment, which operate on him.[32]

The American naturalist writing with Garland, Norris, Crane, London and Dreiser had become firmly rooted in the American segment of reality and experience, and was not entirely dependent on the French influence except with regard to technique and method. It had acquired its own flavour and distinctive features. The post-war American fiction was concerned with a perceptive portrayal of human condition within the rigorous limits of circumstances created by the war. It offered Hemingway and others a sense of liberation from the limitations of subject matter. It turned out to be a battle against the genteel critics which had begun at the turn of the century. The war novels used the theme of

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32. Lars Ahnebrink, The Beginnings of Naturalism in American Fiction, (New York, 1961), p.vi.

violence and physical action, and attempted to "make immediate experience real." In an endeavour to get at the truth, the novelists reached for their own singular experience as the possible means of understanding their own times as well as recreating reality in terms of their moral experience, leaving the impression that they "have not so much chosen their characteristic themes and occasions as been chosen by them."

With World War I America entered "a wider graver world." The artist's attempt to put imaginative order upon that anarchical, chaotic and alienated society met with resistance. A qualitative transformation of culture took place and pointed to "that grand outburst of literary energy [in] that curious, wonderful, and exasperating decade that subsequent decades have constructed into a transcendent metaphor, the Twenties."[33] The war became the historical hiatus for imaginative literature, and the intensity with which the artist and writer responded to the agony of the war and deep anguish of the "flawed peace" in its aftermath tended to blur reality and explode the uses of tradition and the past. The American participation and experience of war compared to Europe was spectatorial, a war of non-

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33. Quentin Anderson, Foreward to John Mormick's, The Middle Distance: A Comparative History of American Imaginative Literature (New York: The Free Press, 1971) pp.202,2.

participants, almost a remote, peripheral engagement in experience because it was always somebody else's war they were fighting. It "created in young men a thirst for abstract danger, not suffered for a cause but courted for itself.... more eagerness for experience and retained the curious attitude of non-participants."[34] Seen from this perspective, their involvement in the experience of the war and their self-conscious sense of being a "lost" generation, "la generation perdue" seemed rather affected as the dictum had no validity either for American society or its contemporary literature. Yet there was a sense of nostalgia for a world untarnished by the ravages of war, a "nostalgia for America" implied in their acute feeling for expatriation. The sense of "lost" connotes a sense of deprivation which Hemingway had self-consciously put to scrutiny. "Lost" did not mean incompatibility or a lack of experience and incompetence to deal with the present predicament, but more significantly, a change in sensibility owing to the experiences of war or their own beliefs in a pre-war past, as well as

> The revelation in life and above, all in art, of areas of existence, moral altitudes, and views of society that the

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34. Malcolm Cowley, xiles Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920's (New York: The Viking Press, 1951), p.43.

> deprived older generation could not understand or accept.[35]

It also "implied a heroic abandonment of certainties" of the earlier pre-war generation in favour of a larger horizon of experience.

The loss was ultimately redeemed in expatriation for a peculiar phenomenon of post-war America was the unprecedented emigration of younger American intellectual voyeurs to Europe. Between 1910-30 because of its puritanism and commercialism, America seemed:

> actively hostile to the artist and intellectual [and] the expatriation, brief or extended, of many of our artists and writers [was] used as an indictment of American civilization.[36]

It was their search for hedonistic pleasure, for "freedom to be irresponsible" which was their own way of desperate escapism into free passion, love and intoxication or as Charles Wales in Scott Fitzgerald's story "Babylon Revisited" queries:

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35. John McCormick, The Middle Distance, p.3.

36. Ernest Ernest, Expatriates and Patriots (Durham NC, 1968), p.vi.

> How many weeks and months of dissipation to arrive at the condition of utter irresponsibility.[37]

But they were artists and writers first, and if as Malcolm Cowley claimed, "One might say the Ambulance Corps and French military transport were college extension courses for a generation of writers" then France was the haven for Americans who had escaped from the "cultural wasteland" to find in European cities the meaning of their exile:

> We dreamed of escape into European cities with crooked streets into Eastern islands... We felt a bashful veneration for everything illicit, whether it was the prostitute living in the next block or the crimes of Nero or the bottle of blackberry cordial.... We felt a certain humility in the face of life, a disinclination to make demands on the world around us. Art and life were two realms; art was looked down upon by the ordinary public, the lifelings, and

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37. Scott Fitzgerald, "Babylon Revisited", The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Malcolm Cowley, p.275

> justly so, since it could never have any affect on them. Art was uncommercial, almost secret, and we hoped to become artists.[38]

However, the mass expatriation was not simply a consequence of the war but of deeper, profounder changes in the American social order in which the intellectuals became more alienated from society and its crass materialism, stern puritan morality and intolerance of the Mid West. The lure of moving still further East to Europe was only a mirage for they soon became disillusioned and got lost in their new environment.

The American social novel entered a new phase and there came an unending stream of great authors and an equally impressive array of new writings of lasting merit and unique literary heritage. The fictional efflorescence found its most pronounced articulation in a distinguished galaxy of writers, Sinclair Lewis, John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner and others. By opening the floodgates of creative energy they had brought forth the second flowering of the American Renaissance socially more vigorous, coherent and purposive even than, the first

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38. Malcolm Cowley, Exile's Return, pp.16-17.

brought about in 1850-55 by Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman and others.

The "lost generation" writers possessed a "rich fund of common emotions" and shared purpose as they also showed greater eagerness for experience. In that they truly reflected the modern sensibility, ironical, introspective and more self-questioning; it came to represent the impoverishment and sheer exhaustion of moral and spiritual resources of a generation under the impact of European War. But the early flowering of their astonishing literary careers failed to find new source of power and depth. Almost all the important novelists of the period lost talent for imaginative creativity in midstream, as it were, sunk into the mire of disillusionment and were disaffiliated, so to say from their age. Malcolm Cowley attributed it to a lack of capacity for renewed growth after middle age which deprived them of second careers, a rare capacity for writers of the first American Renaissance.

The Author:

> Mr. Fitzgerald in his life and writings epitomised 'all the sad young men' of the post-war generation. With the skill

> of a reporter and ability of an artist he captured the essence of a period when flappers and gin, "the beautiful and damned" were symbols of the carefree sadness of an age.[39]

The Fitzgeralds, Scott and his wife Zelda, found themselves cast as models for the new worship of youth. They soon accepted their roles as pioneers. But though they regarded themselves as eponymic figures which they did become, it will be erroneous to blame them for the excesses of the Twenties. In the conflicting drama of manners and aspirations that was going on, Scott Fitzgerald was not only the leading actor but the audience as well; he not only lived in his great moments but stood apart and reckoned the causes. He was simultaneously within and without, participating and observing. He lived more intimately than any writer the life of his times and it became the material he dealt with in his works. This is his double vision or irony. Amidst the echolalia and tom-foolery there was a quest for values operating in his work. He later admitted to his daughter:

> Sometimes I wish I had gone along with that gang [musical comedy, writers], but

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39. Quoted, Mathew J. Brucolli, Some Epic Grandeur, p.4.

> I guess I'm too much a moralist at heart, and really want to preach at people in some acceptable form rather than entertain them.[40]

His contemporary readers frequently acknowledged the effectiveness of his social presentation. He did not use extensive documentation, but relied on evocative details. He was a social historian that chronicled the manners of an age the mood of a people, the psychological conditions of a decade, and the history of a consciousness. Talking of The Great Gatsby, Lionel Trilling says:

> It keeps fresh because it is so specifically conscious of its time.... Its continuing power comes from the courage with which it grasps a moment in history as a great moral fact.[41]

And this is true of all his best works. He began as a spokesman of the Jazz Age but became its symbol, its totemic figure, "its Prince Charming, its fool."[42] The events of his

40. Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Mathew J. Brucolli and Margaret M. Duggan, p.63.

41. F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Arthur Mizener, p.4.

42. Mathew Brucolli, Some Epic Grandeur, p.133.

life have been identified with the history of his times; they duplicated the national moods of Boom and Doom. The Jazz Age:

> Bore him up, flattered him and gave him more money than he had dreamed of simply for telling the people that he felt as they did, that something had to be done with all the nervous energy stored up and unexpended during the war.[43]

Later Gertrude Stein wrote to him:

> You are creating the modern world much as Thackeray did his in Pendennis and Vanity Fair and this isn't a bad compliment. You make a modern world and a modern orgy strangely enough it was never done until you did it in This Side of Paradise.[44]

Fitzgerald considered the novel as

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43. F. Scott Fitzgerald, Echoes of the Jazz Age , p.178.

44. Quoted, F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Crack Up, p.308.

> The strongest and supplest medium for conveying thought and emotion from one human being to another.[45]

But writing short stories paid him better than any other literary work. His publishers used to bring out a collection of Fitzgerald's stories one or two seasons after the appearance of his novels. It was a wise custom in a way because the stories clustered around the novel that was written during the period; they served as potboilers to sustain the author during the financially fallow years between the novels. However, Fitzgerald was often willing to sacrifice a whole story, sometimes a good one, for the sake of a sentence or two that might strengthen a scene in a novel. He did not include "One Trip Abroad", "The Swimmers", "Jacob's Ladder" in any collection because he borrowed from them heavily for the novel Tender Is The Night. "Absolution" too was considered to be a Prologue to The Great Gatsby i.e. the boy Rudolf Miller was intended to be a childhood picture of Jay Gatsby but Fitzgerald changed his mind and preferred to preserve a sense of mystery surrounding Jay Gatsby, and the story was salvaged from a discarded version before he began the novel from a new angle. Malcolm Cowley calls the

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45. The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Malcolm Cowley, p.xix.

stories "disguised autobiographies" because they spoke not only of their times but their author where the heroes:

> were never himself as he was in life, but himself as projected into different situations, such as might have been encountered by members of his spiritual family.[46]

Taken together, they compose not only an informal history of two decades in American life, or rather of one decade and its aftermath, but a sort of journal of his whole career, a struggle against defeat and the sort of qualified triumph he earned by the struggle. A list of his works follows; the novels have been underlined:

March 1920: This Side of Paradise

Sept. 1920: Flappers and Flappers

March 1922: The Beautiful and Damned

Sept. 1922: Tales of the Jazz Age

1925: The Great Gatsby

1926: All the Sad young Men

1934: Tender is the Night

1935: Taps at Reveille

1941: The Last Tycoon

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46. Ibid., p.xviii.

For some years after his death Fitzgerald was a much underrated and almost forgotten writer but Edmund Wilson, Malcolm Cowley, Arthur Mizener and others have laboured to correct what was undoubtedly a false image. As a result he has been the beneficiary of a revival of interest in his life and work resulting in a popularity equal perhaps to and perhaps even greater than he enjoyed in the 1920s. In 1945 John O'Hara stated:

> All he was our best novelist, one of our best novellaists, and one of our finest writers of short stories.[47]

By 1951 the Fitzgerald revival was in full swing and by 1960 the revival had become a resurrection so that as Brucolli says:

> F. Scott Fitzgerald is now permanently placed with the greatest writers who ever lived, where he wanted to be all along, where he belongs.[48]

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47. The Portable F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Dorothy Parker, p.xiv.

48. Mathew Brucolli, Some Epic Grandeur, p.495.

Notwithstanding his own life-experience underlying his creative endeavours, it can be safely assumed that his impulse to autobiography was hardly ever an aspect of his conscious artistic intentions. His creative art was an autonomous achievement even though the autobiographical element lends an extension of meaning which is unique and an inalienable part of his artistic apprehension; but this primarily purports to his exceptional artistic needs. The possible life equations as found in his imaginative writings were indicative of his persistent efforts to seek his own identity as an American in the very social types that he created. Therein he sought to understand that very historically shaped image of his own self which was a composite of variable national elements. This multiplicity of American image was manifestly present in the attitudes and characteristics of the businessmen, debutantes, tycoons and college boys whose actions made for him a composite portrait of American values and morality."[49] It seems that he was making an effort to subject the entire range of contemporary American culture to an assessment of its validity in terms of American history and its ability to survive as a living shaping reality in the American consciousness. This imaginative reiteration of the American past, through the golden haze of nostalgia as Wright Morris perceived "an aesthetic contemplation that made nostalgia

49. Milton R. Sterne, The Golden Moment, p.5.

that snare and illusion, a work of art",[50] while still dreaming of that forbidden paradise, that brave new world which "flowered once for The Dutch sailor's eyes", the mythical America of the imagination, soaring above the sweep of history. The romanticised America of his imagination adding "aesthetic proportions to the past" provided direction to the material autobiographical in his fictional art making him exclaim, "For me the past is forever."[51] It was an almost similar urge that informed his idealistic literary pursuits, the romantic quest for a terrestrial paradise which his fictional heroes were perennially struggling to reach, either to refashion the world in the ideal image of their own imagination or to achieve a meaningful success "in which the flood of money gained will wash [them] on to an enchanted shore of brilliance and gaiety and endless invulnerable youth",[52] in which the rich inhabitants are really "different from you and me", as Fitzgerald wrote in "The Rich Boy". Such was the lure of the American Dream that the heroes' romantic expectations were hinged on the ever-receding Golden West, that iridescent paradise of eternal youthful splendour which invariably eluded the grasp.

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50. Wright Morris, The Territory Ahead (New York, 1963), p.158.

51. The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Andrew Turnbull (London, 1970), p.14.

52. Milton Sterne, The Golden Moment, p.6.

Fitzgerald's quest for the "golden girl" found its idealised life-image in Zelda Sayer, the American girl who lived the American dream and was maddened and ruined by it, the girl whose physical possession became the symbolic fight for happiness against time. Fitzgerald was to idealise and romanticise her to the last possibility apparently for her "total self-centredness and overwhelming instinct for conquest", as perhaps equally for her potentiality for promoting ruin; the femme fatale was symbolic of the quest. Moreover, as, he admitted, she was "the faultiest girl" he'd ever met, and he never wanted to change her because he too had the same faults; instead she had a strong effect on him; she made him want to do something for her, to get something to show her:

> They both had started with good looks and excitable temperaments and the rest was the result of certain accessible popular novels and dressing room conversation culled from a slightly older set.... He waited for the mask to drop off, but at the same time he did not question her right to wear it.[53]

53. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Sentiment and the Use of Rouge", The Apprentice Fiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. John Kuel (New Brunswick, 1965), p.136.

About the time when Fitzgerald had all but lost Zelda because he did not have money or social status to marry her and had sunk into his deepest despair, the promise of his life having been blighted as he imagined, she had written to him consolingly and with sad tenderness:

> Theres nothing in all the world I want but you -- and your precious love -- All the material things are nothing. I'd just hate to live a sordid colourless existence -- because you'd soon love me less -- and less -- and I'd do anything -- anything -- to keep your heart for my own -- I don't want to live -- I want to love first and live incidently -- Why don't you feel that I'm waiting -- I'll come to you lover, when you're ready.... And then when we are alone, I want that you can't do anything without me.[54]

This extraordinary perception of Scott and his relationship to herself and to money was to become inextricably woven into Zelda's imagination. In later years it would

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54. Quoted, Nancy Milford, Zelda Sayers (London, 1974), pp.45-46.

crystallise into a tenuous pattern of self-destructive impulses spelling their doom. That she, from those early beginnings, could perceive this fatal link in their destiny was remarkable considering that her impulses seemingly were to the contrary. Even though it was always Scott who was far exceedingly aware of the corrupting power of money and its utter meaninglessness, it was always he who wanted to be "drunk with the excitement of money", to treat it with utmost contempt and indifference once he possessed it, thus recapturing his moments of acute poverty and dispossession of money and the possibility of loves almost doomed to failure for that reason. Long afterwards, when his affluence had been squandered into material and spiritual bankruptcy, and the meaning of his cracking-up had been fully unravelled, Fitzgerald recalled:

> During the long summer of despair I wrote a novel instead of letters, so it came out alright, but it came out alright for a different person. The man with the jingle of money in his pocket who married the girl a year later would always cherish an abiding distrust and animosity towards the leisure class -- not the conviction of a revolutionist but the smouldering hatred of a peasant.

> I have so many things dependent on its success -- including ofcourse a girl -- not that I expect it to make me a fortune but it will have a psychological effect on me and all my surroundings and besides open up new fields. I am in that stage where every month counts frantically and seems a cudgel in a fight for happiness against time.[57]

He could thus make her yield, and she confessed, "I don't want to be famous and feted -- all I want is to be very young and irresponsible and to feel that my life is my own -- to live happy and die in my own way to please myself--."[58] She was the perfect image of the flapper, bright, gay, vivacious and irresponsible; he need not invent his "flapper", and provoked by criticism of her, he wrote:

> No personality as strong as Zelda's could go without getting criticism .... I've always known that any girl who gets stewed in public, who frankly enjoys and tells shocking stories, who smokes

57. Ibid., p.157.

58. Quoted, Nancy Milford, Zelda Sayers, p.65.

> constantly and makes the remark that she has 'kissed thousands of men and intends to kiss thousands more'; cannot be considered beyond reproach even if above it.... I fell in love with her courage, her sincerity and her flaming self respect and its these things I'd believe in even if the whole world indulged in wild suspicion that she wasn't all that she should be .... I love her and that's the beginning and end of everything. You're still a Catholic but Zelda's the only God I have left now.[59]

Success was thus identified with the accumulated aggregate of fame and fortune, the dream world of eternal youth, the golden girl and wealth to spur his intense longing and desires, what money could bring to life in terms of personal fulfilment. The symbolic quest had been mythicised into there being "something enchanted, as if predestined, about the coming together of this pair whose deep similarity only began with their fresh, scrubbed beauty." In Zelda, Fitzgerald had found:

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59. Letters, p.67.

> a girl whose uninhibited love of life rivalled his own and whose daring originality, and repartee would never bore him. With Ginevera part of the attraction had been the society she came from; with Zelda it was she alone who made an overwhelming appeal to his imagination. She pleased him in all the surface ways, but she also had depth he fell in love with, without understanding why.[60]

Remembering these ecstatic moments with Scott, in after years, Zelda wrote:

> There seemed to be some heavenly support beneath his shoulder blades that lifted his feet from the ground in ecstatic suspension, as if he secretly enjoyed the ability to fly but was walking as a compromise to convention.[61]

They were young and life had not yet caught up with them.

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60. Quoted, Andrew Turnbull, Scott Fitzgerald, p.94.

61. Zelda Fitzgerald, Save Me The Waltz (New York, 1932), p.45.

Zelda was the composite "flapper" that he married "after a grand reconciliation", and thus made his dream girl the symbol of an era, the apotheosis of an age whose triumph and tragedy she so appropriately represented. This interchanged role of life and fiction made possible Fitzgerald's telescoping his vision of the waste of enthusiasm and dedication, the blight of expectations of innocence, into the vision of his fictional characters, a vision that continued to haunt him till the end of his life as is revealed in his letter to his daughter:

> You are doing exactly what I did at Princeton. I wore myself out.... From your letter I guess that you are doing exactly the same thing and it just makes my stomach fall out to think of it. Amateur work is fun but the price of it is just simply tremendous. In the end you get "Thankyou" and that's all. You give three performances which everybody promptly forgets and somebody has a breakdown -- that somebody being the enthusiast.[62]

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62. Letters, p.85.

This moralistic intention wells up with persistent reiteration throughout his life. Writing to his daughter a few years before his death he observed:

> I simply don't want you in danger and I don't want you to do anything inappropriate to your age. For premature adventure one pays an atrocious price. As I told you once, every boy I know who drank at eighteen or nineteen is now safe in his grave. The girls who were what we called 'speeds' (in our stoneage slang) at sixteen were reduced to anything they could get at their marrying time. Its in the logic of life that no young person ever 'gets away with anything'. They fool their parents but not their contemporaries. It was on the cards that Ginevera King should get fired -- also that your mother should wear out young.[63]

Such moral preachings seemed essential aspects of his artistic conscience, and what he thought in the end would preserve him against the ravages of time and social

63. Ibid., p.30.

misadventures: "I think that despite a tendency to self indulgence you and I have some essential seriousness that will manage to preserve us."[64]

His first novel, This Side of Paradise (1920) represents his early attempts to reconcile his adolescent experience to his moralistic intentions. Inspite of its surface frivolity and youthful profligacy his artistic perceptiveness was of a high moral order. It was immensely popular and a critical success. He had written to Edmund Wilson, "I really believe that no one else could have written so scarchingly the story of the youth of our generation."[65]

Fitzgerald's second novel, The Beautiful and Damned came out in 1922. By this time he had fame, fortune, money and the golden girl, what the youth of his age could not easily command. He could feel like his "brother", Anthony Patch:

> The fire was bright and the breeze sighing in through the curtains brought in a mellow damp, promising May and the world of summer. His soul thrilled to remote harmonies; he heard the strum of far guitars and waters lapping on a warm

64. Ibid., 30.

65. Ibid., p.343.

> Mediterranean shore -- for he was young now as he would never be again, and more triumphant than death.[66]

However, his sober glamourising of youth now changed to somber speculation on what he saw in the post-war mood of disillusionment, impairing of traditional values and imminent deterioration of American society. The interim following This Side of Paradise added fresh insights and moulded his attitude to the observed reality of the contemporary scene:

> While I took little time off, a fresh picture of America began to form before my eyes. The uncertainties of 1919 were over -- there seemed little doubt about what was going to happen -- America was going on the greatest, gaudiest spree in history and there was going to be plenty to tell about it. The whole golden boom was in the air.... All the stories that came into my head had a touch of disaster in them -- the lovely young creatures in my novels went to ruin, the diamond mountains of my short stories

66. F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Beautiful and Damned, p.55.

> blew up, my millionaires were as beautiful and damned as Thomas Hardy's peasants. In life then things hadn't happened yet. But I was pretty sure living wasn't the reckless careless business these thought -- this generation just younger than me.[67]

He was obviously looking for an explanation of a world that had crumbled in the upheaval of World War I and which showed no apparent signs of stabilising.

Scott and Zelda had become symbolic of the romance of the youthful, the insensitive and irresponsible hedonists with their inexhaustible, incandescent vitality for pleasure. Their lives seemed to be drifting close to that of the Patches:

> The magnificent attitude of not giving a damn altered overnight; from being a mere tenet of Gloria's it became the entire solace and justification of what they chose to do and what consequences it brought. Not to be sorry, not to lose

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67. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Early Success", The Crack-Up, ed. Edmund Wilson (New York, 1956), p.87.

> one cry of regret, to live according to a clear code of honour toward each other, and to seek the moment's happiness as fervently and persistently as possible.[68]

Apparently, they were an amiable couple, charming and innocent, with an aura of success clinging to them like "gold dust." But their lives drifted aimlessly, lacking centrality emotional and spiritual moorings: finding no nucleus to which we could cling, we became a small nucleus ourselves and gradually fitted our disruptive personalities into the contemporary scene of New York."[69] It was obvious how swiftly the undercurrents of discontent were seeping into the surface charm and gaiety of their lives; Zelda observed years later with nostalgia, "It might have been Nemesis incubating." Their lives had been changing into pathetic but appropriate symbols of the American decadence for it appears as if the course of Fitzgerald's life, as of the Twenties, ran parallel in the accidents of circumstances which led to their soaring prosperity in that era of boom and their equally swift decline before the decade ended. Thus The Beautiful and Damned is an unedited odyssey of his personal and artistic life, of his demonic love and literary

68. F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Beautiful and Damned, p.

69. F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Crack-Up, p.27.

failure. No wonder then, that the early working titles of the novel had been "The Demon Lover", "The Diary of a Literary Failure", "The Flight of the Rocket" and "The Beautiful Lady Without Mercy." The events of the novel have close resemblance to Zelda and Scott, and the early years of their marriage, its haunting, lingering honeymoon and how "he and his beautiful young wife are wrecked on the shoals of dissipation" as he admitted to Scribner. However, besides being completely absorbed in Zelda and being influenced by her ideas, the new point of view was largely shaped by the realist writings of Theodore Dreiser, Frank Norris and Harold Fredrick. He wrote to Maxwell Perkins in 1920:

> I've fallen lately under the influence of an author who's quite changed my point of view.... I've just discovered him -- Frank Norris... There are many things in Paradise that might have been written by Norris -- Those drunken scenes, for instance -- infact, all the realism.[70]

In the same letter he lamented the agitation against Dreiser:

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70. Letters, p.162.

> I don't know what I'll do now -- what in hell is the use of trying to write decent fiction if a bunch of old women refuse to let anyone hear the truth.[71]

Norris' Vandover and The Brute (1914) impressed Fitzgerald and he wanted to create an authentic novel on its pattern thus, both in its naturalistic treatment of love as well as its closeness to the Twenties, The Beautiful and Damned resembles Vandover, and besides "the carnival of disaster" and the unabated, continuous perversities that Anthony Patch and Vandover share, the two novels portray pervasive moral decay. However, Patch is also" the victim of an implacable fate" and the novel was not the naturalistic kind of fiction that Fitzgerald had contemplated. In the novel he also found a ground for battle against commercial desiccation of contemporary culture.

In his artistic endeavours, Fitzgerald wanted to move beyond the realism and achievement of This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned. That is why he was thinking of the epical romance of the American Dream and its final failure and collapse in the very fulfilment of its promise of material possibilities and surfeit of success. The theme of the American Dream being destroyed by its own excess seemed

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71. Ibid., p.162.

implicit in his "final decision about America." He was moving towards The Great Gatsby (1925). The love affairs of Scott Fitzgerald with Ginevera King and Zelda Sayer formed the basic material of the novel. Of the former he complained to his daughter years later:

> She was the first girl I ever loved and I have faithfully avoided seeing her up to this moment to keep that illusion perfect, because she ended up by throwing me over with the most supreme boredom and indifference .... but Ginevera had a great deal besides beauty.[72]

Such emotional depths of his adolescent experience were largely confined to his unrequited love and his unfulfilled dreams of "poor boys shouldn't think of marrying rich girls", thus wealth was sought not only to remove class distinctions, replace aristocracy but to repossess the golden girl. The particular problem that he dealt within The Great Gatsby was the ill-begotten, unmerited wealth of the nouveau riche the social parvenu who suddenly climbs to great fortune amassing mysteriously heaps of soiled money, the masquerading plutocrats who achieved social status

72. Ibid., p.34.

through financial power only to be destroyed at the end. Fitzgerald achieved his ambition of being a great writer and artist and for years was associated only with The Great Gatsby.

From May 1924 to December 1931, Fitzgerald spent intermittently in Europe. These years constituted conspicuous failure for him, both personal and artistic; he seemed to have lost his artistic vitality and did little writing; he experienced moments of imaginative sterility both because love and money were losing their charisma and fascination; their relations were strained and she had become coeval with his artistic aspirations and the squandering of his hard earned money, and a futile and wasteful life of parties and sprees of drinking bouts. Years later, when he had been fully educated into the meaning of "the authority of failure", he would relive his memory of Zelda with all the remorse and nostalgic grief for the happy days that had turned into a prolonged agony and nightmare; in a mood of lingering pathos and kindness, he recalled in 1935:

> Do you remember, before the keys
> turned in the locks,
> While life was a closeup, and not
> an occasional letter,

That I hated to swim naked
from the rocks
While you liked absolutely
nothing better?
Do you remember many hotel bureaus
that had
Only three drawers? But the only
bother
Was that each of us got holy,
then got mad,
Trying to give the third one to
the other.
East, West, the little car turned,
right or wrong
Up an erroneous Alp, an unmapped
Savoy river.
We blamed each other in cadences
acid and strong
And in an hour, laughed and
called it liver.
And though the end was
desolate and unkind
To turn the calendar at June and
find December
On the next leaf; still, stupid-got
with grief, I find

These are the only quarrels that
I can remember.[73]

Fitzgerald paid heavily for this profligacy in moral and material resources. The youthful senility of those years would overtake Zelda with lunacy and he would suffer the spiritual remorse for the rest of his life. Recalling those years of his European sojourn, he ruminated, "I had fair years to waste, years that I can honestly regret, in seeking the eternal carnival by the sea."[74] While he lingered in his self-imposed exile in Europe mostly in France and Italy, where The Great Gatsby had been largely written he remained a perceptive observer- participant of European life and manners. But more than Europeans, it was the Americans in Europe, like that of Henry James' novels that Fitzgerald had chosen to portray in his new novel. He would write about the American rich who regularly wintered in the salubrious climes of French and Italian Rivieras both because moral laxity of European life offered an escape from the rigours of puritan morality that most Americans unconsciously feared, as well as the new freedom, as a result of material riches that gave them a new status and a privileged position

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73. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Lamp in the Window", F. Scott Fitzgerald in His Own Time, ed. Mathew J. Brucolli and Jackson R. Bryer (Kent, Ohio, 1971) p.73.

74. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Early Success", The Crack-Up, p.89.

in the war-devastated Europe. The Riviera had become the symbol of waste in his mind, and as he disclosed to John Peale Bishop from France, "I am beginning a new novel next month on the Riviera".[75] He had known most of the rich Americans who flocked to Europe and Antibes, the Riviera resort midway between Cannes and Nice; most of them were the American writers of the post-war generation, Hemingway, Archibald MacLeish, Dos Passos, Max Eastman, Gerald Murphy and Rex Ingrams. Infact, the people and setting of Tender is the Night was already rooting itself in his mind. It was Fitzgerald's personal response to experience and the inter-personal relationships between his wife Zelda and the many people around that formed the basic material. As a portrait of an age and its fashionable life and frivolities and the nostalgic moments of its importune indulgences, it transcended the mere documentation fit only for historical curiosity and moved into an area of experience where it acquired a critical and imaginative value, all its own. He had reoriented his entire thinking over the novel and planned altogether a new one based on their lives, and to be a kind of defence of his point of view against what Zelda had written in Save Me The Waltz about their marriage. Zelda had taken almost exactly a decade, 1920-30, from her marriage to Scott to her lapsing into schizophrenic insanity in Paris. The Flapper of the Twenties had been battered by

75. Letters, p.378.

her own excesses. The high price she paid for inordinate freedom of access to male prerogatives, the order she imposed upon her shattered and shambled past. Her novel expressed the haunting, agony and ecstasy of a woman's waxing and waning marital love.

The nine long years that slipped between The Great Gatsby and Tender Is The Night proved a "costly lapse and an ignominious failure." The time lag was not as significant as the material and attitudinal changes that effected Fitzgerald's critical reputation as a writer between these years. With The Great Gatsby, he came to "his full maturity as a novelist", and for his next novel he set even a higher and unrealistic aim of finding "something really new in form, idea and structure -- the mode for the age that Joyce and Stein [were] searching for, that Conrad didn't find",[76] a novel that would excel in its scope and variety all contemporary writers, even the ones who had been the models for his earlier novels. He hoped that once the novel was completed and published, "I shall be the best American novelist."[77] However, Tender Is The Night lacked the quality of The Great Gatsby and could not be the great work that Fitzgerald had hoped; inspite of its excellent prose,

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76. Ibid., p.201.

77. Ibid., p.212.

beautiful and limpid, and all the surface charm of its presentation, it had been discarded by the reading public.

With The Crack-Up essays in 1936, Fitzgerald emerged to be "a writer because that was my only way of life, but I would cease any attempt to be a person -- to be kind, just or generous..... I have now at last become a writer only."[78] He made efforts to retrieve his physical and mental loss and launched into being a serious and responsible writer. The motion pictures had taken over as a powerful medium for disseminating culture so he wanted to strengthen the novel as an art form:

> I saw that the novel which at my maturity was the strongest medium for conveying thought and emotion from one human being to another, was becoming subordinated to a mechanical and communal art, that whether in the hands of Hollywood merchants or Russian idealists, was capable of reflecting only the tritest thought the most obvious emotion. It was an art in which words were subordinated to images. Where

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78. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Handle With Care", The Crack-Up, p.83.

> the personality was worn down to the inevitable low gear collaboration. As long past as 1930, I had a hunch that the talkies would make even the best novelist as archaic as silent pictures.... There was a rankling indignity, that to me had become almost an obsession in seeing the power of the written word subordinated to another power, a more glittering, a grosser power.[79]

Ironically, he himself would become a screen writer for Hollywood. However, the "crack-up" was his coinage for his crisis of self-confidence, a state of emotional bankruptcy which began during the years following the publication of Tender Is The Night, a state induced partly by his realisation that he had failed as a writer and could not cope with the demands upon his talents. Besides, he was piqued by Zelda's affair with a French aviator, Edourd Jozan. This occurred when he was working on The Great Gatsby, and he used the theme of betrayal and infidelity in etching out the character of Daisy Buchanan. In the summer of 1935 he himself had one such intense experience:

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79. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Pasting It Together", The Crack-Up, p.78.

> I have just emerged not totally unscathed, I'm afraid, from a short violent love -affair.... I had done much better to let it alone because it was scarcely a time in my life for one more emotion. Still its done now and tied up in cellophane and -- may be someday I'll get a chapter out of it. God what a hell of a profession to be a writer. One is simply because one can't help it.[80]

The Crack-Up neatly sums up the drama of his quest for self-identity. It has three acts so to say: "The crack up" when his old self faced destruction and he "cracked like an old plate", "Pasting it together" cleared the stumbling debris that came in the way of self-renewal, "Handle with Care" completed the process of self-construction. The new Fitzgerald emerged but all such resolves needed psychological readjustment to the new set of circumstances without which the promise of his artistic accomplishment would fail to materialise. These problems became central concern in the articles compiled under Afternoon of an Author.

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80. Letters, pp.547-48.

The financial predicament persisted and events were crowding in to urge him toward his last chance, the beckoning West, the symbol of pioneering pursuit of wealth and security; but more meaningful was the promise that the West held out for a symbolic resurgence of his creative imagination. However, he secretly dreaded going to Hollywood; he had warned himself, "Never any luck with the movies. Stick to your last, boy."[81] But he could not resist the lure of movies much as he hated to be in Hollywood:

> I'd have gone to Hollywood a year ago last Spring. I don't think I could do now but I might. Especially if there is no choice. Twice I have worked out there on other people's stories .... It simply fails to use what qualities I have.... It would be hard to change my temperament in middle-life. No single man with a serious literary reputation has made good there.... I'm afraid unless some such break occurs I'd be no good in the industry..... It simply isn't in me to do my duty blindly. I

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81. F. Scott Fitzgerald, Afternoon of an Author, ed. Arthur Mizener (New York, 1959), p.178.

> have to follow my fate with my eyes wide open.[82]

Though he "sincerely hated the place", a month later, in June 1937 he left for Hollywood on a screen-writer's assignment at the studios of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Twice before he had failed to make a way for himself in 1927 and 1932 but he thought he'd better make it once more, "and I have every reason to think that he will come through. He'd better."[83] Though he had noted "I left my capacity for hoping on the little roads that led to Zelda's sanatorium", a new vista was opening before him.

His contract ran out in January, 1939 and it was not renewed because he had not done enough to get proper film accreditations. His reputation and experience as a novelist seemed of no avail in making him a good screen writer, and in a mood of bitterness he wrote to Joseph Mankiewicz:

> I guess all these years I've been kidding myself about being a good writer. For nineteen years with two years out for sickness, I've written

82. Letters, p.420.

83. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Financing Finnegan", The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Malcolm Cowley (New York, 1951), p.455.

> best selling entertainment, and my dialogue is supposedly right up at the top. But I learn from you that it isn't good dialogue and you can take a few hours off and do much better.[84]

Such disappointments came very close to closing the hopes of a new career in the movies for him. But in the Hollywood atmosphere of traditional conviviality Fitzgerald was constrained to maintain his surface calm and bland optimism. Against his customary social boisterousness of early years he much preferred his privacy. Though he was compelled by an inner necessity to take on the character of a "double life", in no way more significant than in his outward life as a screen-writer and his secret life as an artist planning to re-emerge someday as "a butterfly from a cocoon."

Sometime during the autumn of 1938, Fitzgerald started casually talking about the Hollywood movie world to Sheilah Graham with a view to turning into a novel what he found in that "expansive world". His circumstances, intellectual maturity and events, all brought a sense of urgency and spurred his artistic ambition to write. Moreover he had noted, "show me a hero and I will write you a tragedy." Hollywood stood out as a new powerful symbol of recreated

84. Letters, p.583.

relevance of art, and provided Fitzgerald with a new emotional and intellectual cohesiveness. The Hollywood movie had become the precise metaphor for what he remarked at the end of The Last Tycoon. "There are no second acts in American lives."[85] He would himself prove the fallacy of the statement of concentration of his intellectual energies and efforts towards making the second act succeed in a measure where the first had failed. He also saw the medium of the movie having possibilities of serious art, even perhaps "the strongest and supplest medium for conveying thought and emotion from one human being to another."[86] However, his essential artistic effort was to be in the direction of the novel no matter what he might be able to achieve as a screen writer. The Last Tycoon (1941) epitomises a Hollywood that stood for the entire sociological and moral implication of America "going West" in quest of a vision of good hope and greater, innocent expectations, Monroe Stahr can be conceived as the archetypal heroic figure of American society, the man who rises to the top with nothing to back him (no wealth, no family, no social status) except sheer dint of courage, intelligence and a tenacious will to struggle and attain the highest. At the same time he

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85. F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Last Tycoon, p.78.

86. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Pasting It Together", The Crack-Up, p.78.

contains within himself the tragic possibilities implicit in the mythical dream that pursues him from the start.

To Fitzgerald "the wise and tragic sense of life" implied the sense that life is essentially a cheat and its conditions are those of defeat, and the redeeming things are not happiness and pleasure but the "deeper satisfactions that come out of the struggle." This conviction helped him to order his experience in the light of what his imagination seized as the essential sadness of life. In 1936 he wrote to his daughter, Scott i.e.:

> A whole lot of people have found life a whole lot of fun.... I have not found it so. But I had hell of alot of fun when I was in my twenties and thirties: and I feel it is your duty to accept the sadness, the tragedy of the world we live in, with a certain esprit.[87]

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87. Letters, p.26.

CHAPTER II

THE VISION OF PARADISE

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,

But to be young was very heaven.

(William Wordsworth)

CHAPTER II

The Vision of Paradise

> As the centre of energy shifted from an agrarian to an industrial society, from American prairies to the city, the lonely independence of the former yielded to the solitary dependence of the latter. In this solitary dependency novelists ... found ... [a] motive for their commitment to the adolescent whose voice was in resonance with all that was most strident in their shared experience of American life.1

In This Side of Paradise (1920), Fitzgerald tried to recapture a lost childhood beside exploring the tribulations of late adolescence. Being the most articulate writer-spokesman of his generation and its gilded youth he rightly admitted to Edmund Wilson:

> I really believe that *no one else could* have written so searchingly the story of the youth of our generation.2

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1. Ihab Hasan, "The Idea of Adolescence in American Fiction", The American Experience ed. Hennig Cohen (Philadelphia, 1969), p.140.

He was aware that his vision of the young showed them in a hundred poses, from ludicrous to pathetic, and explored thoroughly every conceivable issue, trait and dilemma of the young. The Fitzgerald world has a complete hold upon the mind and imagination of the characters. It controls and shapes ambiguous attitudes and approaches to life, resulting from the conflicting dilemmas and deviations that his generation experienced.

The thematic and structural design of the novel, This Side of Paradise pertains to an extended symbolic world, an aesthetic imitation of an ordered, conventionalised abstraction into which the characters, beautiful and wealthy young men and women try to adjust in search of a quest for life and meaning. They have not compromised with life and act in accordance with their imaginative perception and moral insight. The world is one of innocence, impervious to adult responsibility, placid enchanting, untramelled by passions and pursuits of ambition; it is a world of one vast juvenile intrigue when all things seemed larger than life and purer than childhood dreams. Amory Blaine' the hero-protagonist is the "romantic egotist" whose fascinating tale glows with the glorious spirit of the abounding contemporary youth. It is an epic of American adolescence with its immature and morbidly tantalising passions and ridiculously

2. The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald ed. Andrew Turnbull (London, 1968), p. 343

exasperating poses and exploits. Amory's exuberance of imagination and sparkling enthusiasm and zest for living, for all its gay and youthful abandon, has, nevertheless, a quality of an after-glow of his burnt-out dreams. He and all others are like clustered islands, isolated from one another. In his Paradise he is an "enchanted voyager".

Paradise is a very powerful symbol in the novel. It connotes an easy ambience in which Amory's dreams float in sheer abandon. But that is only at the superficial level because there is the 'double irony', and beneath his vision of paradise lies self delusion which is pernicious and sinister moreso because it is impenetrable and undetected. He seems oblivious to the brooding horrors that stock the surface calm of his elysian dreams, and could turn them into haunting nightmares. The other side of Paradise thus is the hell of despondency in which he will languish and linger after disenchantment and disillusion. He is the American Adam.

The myth is equivalent to that of the American Dream, a gilded world of golden promise of wealth and the imaginative possibility of its fulfilment, emotionally sterile and spiritually poor, turned into a Valley of Ashes, a Wasteland. This aspect of American wealth, its cultural ramifications and corrupting influence are amplified through

various episodic events and adventures of Amory and the golden girls who have unbounding faith in the inexhaustibility of romance. America thus is a:

> Whore to the prototypical, romantic Columbus of the imagination.... She leads him on, and in betraying his expectations destroys his Adamic, redemptive identity.[3]

Fitzgerald projects Amory through the image of the "brummegem god", a symbol for the resplendent, burnished golden image of American sophomoric adolescence. He precedes Jay Gatsby in forming a platonic conception of himself; his imaginative ambition and moral puritanism are essential and fundamental to him. His constant impassioned strivings keep his adolescent yearnings, his gestures of certitude and self-adulation in an unceasing spin of the youth's quest for his fundamental self. His experiences acquire an imaginative actuality and through it Amory evolves his code of adolescent values and egotism, the "aristocratic egotism" to which his family name became a symbolic tag. Thinking this code befits his fortunate youth, capable of infinite expansion for good or evil, nobody seems to dissuade him

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3. Milton R. Sterne, the Golden Moment (Urbana, 1970), p.7.

from reaching the heights within the permissible limits of the code. Even his "puritan conscience" made him realise the feasibility of his social and mental capabilities, his poise, his animal magnetism and charisma. However, his conscience has estranged him both socially and morally from his cultural environment:

> Vanity, tempered with self suspicion if not self-knowledge, a sense of people as automatons of his will, a desire to 'pass' as many boys as possible and get to a vague top of the world.... With this background did Amory drift into adolescence.[4]

It is "a state of superloneliness" in which he finds himself in a peculiar "lethargic content" and suspects "how superficially was the over-lay of his own generation ... that the old cynical kinship with his mother had not been broken."[5] Such euphoria of dissipation is a legacy of the Blaines' that shapes his early impressions and perceptions. His mother, Beatrice, opens up the glomourised world of "wonderful visions" and dreams:

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4. F. Scott Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise (Scribners, 1920), p. 21.

5. Ibid, p.22.

> bronze rivers lapping marble shores, the great birds that soared through the air, parti-coloured birds with iridescent plumage.... strange music and the flare of barbaric trumpets... gardens that flaunted coloring against which this would be quite dull, moons that whirled and swayed, paler than winter moons, more golden than harvest moons.[6]

Such dreaming lyricism reveals Beatrice's mental and spiritual vacuity and tragic passivity. It is the very ambience of glitter and glamour which is stifling, reversing values, prohibiting virtues, and promoting barrenness. It is a culture rich in arts and traditions, no doubt, but barren of ideas. She is a product "of those days when the great gardener clipped the inferior roses to produce one perfect bud."[7] She is the privileged one of society to blossom forth while the less fortunate are pruned and sacrificed. It is her symbolic detachment culturally. (she is placed in a gilded age, a distanced era) that helps create a peculiar nostalgia:

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6. Ibid., p.23.

7. Ibid., p.4.

> All in all Beatrice O'Hara absorbed the sort of education that will be quite impossible ever again; a tutelage measured by the number of things and people one could be contemptuous of and charming about.[8]

She is beautiful, young, sad, disengaged, aristocratic, surpassing the conventional upper middle-class values. Her contempt for the Mid western American society in which Amory must carve a niche for himself, her" egotistical disdain" for prevailing social mores and manners makes her indispensable for him. However, he does perceive the futility of her affectations but then they are a part of her atmosphere.

Beatrice is symbolic of the shaping hand of society that must mould Amory's "aristocratic egotism", his self-awareness.

> Amory 's heightened sense of his own early desire and necessity to adopt established values lays the foundation

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8. Ibid., p.4.

> for the significance of the novels social observation.[9]

His social superiority is not as much an aspect of his adolescent vision as the imaginative reality of the superior world of his mind, of his ideal world. Like the author, whom he represents, he is more truly a representative of his inner self. Values of his immediate shaping social environment are sifted as he is exposed to the early "learning experience"; his "education" is a goal and continues beyond his schooling and Princeton. Thus he lifts the veil of illusion from his mother's life. She gradually shrinks into the background having provided the essential cultural staple for his adolescent imagination. However, her cultural veneer is only obscured, not hidden.

Beatrice's presence is indispensable to Amory because it prepares him for the "preliminary skirmishes with his own generation". His desperate, unbearable, loneliness colours his mood of romantic despair. The symbolic figures of golden girls loom larger but are illusive. He is unable to shoot out of the world of cramping inhibiting possibilities and so gets more and more isolated. However, the real Amory must emerge:

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9. Robert Sklar, F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Last Laocoon (New York, 1967), p.43.

> The Minneapolis years were not a thick enough overlay to conceal the 'Amory plus Beatrice" from ferreting eyes of a boarding school so St. Regi's had very painfully drilled Beatrice out of him, and begun to lay down new and more conventional planking on the fundamental Amory.[10]

His eccentricities make him lapse into reveries of "dreamy content". He began to discover himself, exploited his talents for poetry and read whatever pandered to his "languid interests". His philosophical progress in his abstract posturing and intellectual self-analysis brings new dimensions to his sense of what he must resist in his cultural environment. The "slicker" is his coinage for what can acceptably proclaim his superiority beyond the reach of social conventions for he has aspired for a scintillating heroism that projects his adolescent dreams and expectations.

Another character that shapes Amory's early responses, and of whom Amory cannot but be a shadow is Monsignor Thayer Darcy, who symbolises Catholicism, "the gorgeous adolescent

10. F. Scott Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, p.35.

dream world of rich appearances". Beatrice sends him to Monsignor because she wants him to talk to Amory, "I feel he can be such a help". As a matter of fact:

> When she had first returned to her country there had been a pagan, Swinburnian young man in Ashville, for whose passionate kisses and unsentimental conversations she had taken a decided penchant They had discussed the matter pro and con with an intellectual romancing devoid of soppiness. Eventually she had decided to marry for background and the young pagan from Ashville had gone through a spiritual crisis, joined the Catholic Church, and was now Monsignor Darcy".[11]

He lived like an "exiled Stuart king waiting to be called to the rule of his land". When Amory first met him, he was forty-four, "intensely ritualistic, startlingly dramatic, loved the idea of God enough to be a celibate, and rather liked his neighbour".

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11. Ibid., p.7.

> Children adored him because he was a child; youth revelled in his company because he was still a youth and couldn't be shocked. In the proper land and century he might have been a Richelieu at present he was a very moral, very religious (if not particularly pious) clergyman, making great mystery about pulling rusty wires, and appreciating life to the fullest, if not entirely enjoying it.[12]

They maintain contact through letters and otherwise, Monsignor giving him "more egotistic food for consumption". Amory acknowledges that Monsignor can make things clear. Once when he felt his career had gone up in smoke and he was beginning to think he was growing eccentric he went to Monsignor who asked him to make a clean start and do "the next thing".

> The priest seemed to guess Amory's thoughts before they were clear in his own head, so closely related were their minds in form and groove.[13]

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12. Ibid., p.26.

13. Ibid., p.114.

Its a father and son relationship:

> "Don't let yourself feel worthless.... An idealisation of some such man as Leonardo da Vinci would be a more valuable beacon to you at present.... do keep your clarity of mind, and if fools or sages dare to criticise don't blame yourself too much.... its that half miraculous sixth sense by which you detect evil, its the half realised fear of God in your heart.... Whatever your metier proves to be religion, architecture, literature I'm sure you would be much safer anchored to the church, but I won't risk my influence by arguing with you...."[14]

Monsignor had made religion "a thing of lights and shadows, making all light and shadow merely aspects of God" so that people felt safe when he was near; they depended on him. After his death Amory "found something that he wanted, had always wanted and always would want":

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14. Ibid., pp.115-116.

> not be to admired, as he had feared; not to be loved, as he had made himself believe; but to be necessary to people to be indispensable.... Amory felt an immense desire to give people a sense of security.[15]

Thus in Monsignor Darcy the glory and splendour of Catholicism is worldly and material shorn of its spiritual colour. He represents an urbane, sophisticated glittering figure of a resplendent power more cosmopolitan than theologically orthodox. Amory's world is enlarged to conform to a public conduct which Monsignor never demands; Amory's social brilliance sparkles. It is Monsignor who asks him as a favour to meet Clara Page his third cousin widowed six months and very poor; he further adds that shes rather a remarkable woman, and just about Amory's age. Further, Amory is also taught the symbolic import of his experience in distinguishing between the "personality" and the "personage", of social puritanism which reflected an insistence on social manners in terms of social propriety and moral puritanism of deep ethical responsibility which sanctions what is the ethical notion of "good", a meaningful distinction in middle-class culture paralysed by hypocritical commercialisation. Amory must seek his

15. Ibid., pp.286-87.

glittering ornaments in his accomplishments and achievements.

Amory's entrance into Princeton University pertains to his symbolic search for self-identity which he would discover during his escape from adolescence into maturity. For him Princeton was "good-looking aristocratic.... like a spring day .... Oxford might have been a bigger field". In 1939 Fitzgerald wrote, "You see, I.... announced the birth of my young illusions in This Side of Paradise". And certainly, Amory-Fitzgerald does develop out of these "young illusions" and comes to occupy the centre of the golden dream-like world. He emerges when "The Egotist Becomes the Personage". Later from the vantage point of actuality Amory could observe and evaluate the merger of his own adolescence into experience, the "personality" into the "personage". He looks round to find:

> a new generation shouting the old cries; learning the old creeds, through a reverie of long days and nights; destined finally to go out into the grey turmoil to follow love and pride; a new generation dedicated more than the last to the fear of poverty and the worship of success; grown up to find all Gods

> dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken.[16]

At the end of the book, he would learn that what his fundamental self-recognised as the new values was something other than what his own generation approved. The emergence of real personal identity comes with the blending of his imagination and his experience which brings into contact two different sets of materials. But having a singular focus on evil which is the moral centre of the novel and which Amory must realise in his self in order to achieve his personage, his fundamental self. He meets them both while at Princeton.

The essential moral meaning of This Side of Paradise lies in this quest and discovery that makes the novel a serious, earnest book more than just a contemporary, popular novel; he accepts:

> If living isn't a seeking for the Grail
> it may be a damned amusing game.[17]

In its symbolism of evil, the novel reaches out to the very indictment of the American moneyed society. The essence of evil lies "in the spurious beauty of American wealth", not

16. Ibid., p.304.

17. Ibid., p.300.

money itself, but something unidentifiable that makes the "very rich" different. The adolescent American dream is a Utopian quest for freedom and release from the constraining social, economic conditions and circumstances which have been beautifully illustrated in the story "The Diamond As Big As The Ritz" and "The Rich Boy".

Dick Humbird, Amory's Princeton contemporary, symbolises that evil whose corrupting tentacles have spread out to keep Amory locked out of paradise, in a "great labyrinth":

> He was where Goethe was when he began "Faust"; he was where Conrad was when he wrote "Almayer's Folly".[18]

But this is a later realisation. In his first juvenile enthusiasm Amory had regarded Humbird, as one epitomising his adolescent aspirations, fancies, intellectual passions and philosophical ideals. It was always "The quiet Humbird, with his impatient superciliousness" who was the centre towards which Amory's social fancies gravitated:

> Dick Humbird had, ever since freshman year, seemed to Amory a perfect type of aristocrat. He was slender but well-

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18. Ibid., p.284.

> built —— black curly hair, straight features, and rather a dark skin. Everything he said sounded intangibly appropriate; He possessed infinite courage, an averagely good mind, and sense of humour with a clear charm and noblesse oblige that varied it from righteousness. He could dissipate without going to pieces, and even his most bohemian adventures seemed running it out: People dressed like him, tried to talk as he did. Amory decided that he probably held the world back, but he wouldn't have changed him....[19]

Humbird, the paragon of social virtues and graces, symbolised the middle-class urge for snobbishness that his personality calmly exhibited:

> He differed from the healthy type that was essentially middle-class —— he never seemed to perspire. Some people could be familiar with a chauffeur without having it returned; Humbird could have lunched at Sherry's with a

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19. Ibid., p.86.

> coloured man, yet people would have somehow known that it was all right. He was not a snob, though he only knew half his class. His friends ranged from the highest to lowest but it was impossible to "cultivate him". Servants worshipped him, and treated him like a God. He seemed the eternal example of what the upper class tries to be.[20]

Amory gradually learned the "shocking truth" that Humbird's father was a classic American nouveau riche who had acquired his wealth not through real estate speculation but who had started as a grocery clerk and had moved to the Eastern United States, New York when his rising fortune could give him a new social identity. Amory had felt a curious sinking sensation hearing this for the social pretences nostalgically recall. The golden past that lies in the future which is imagined and typical of the American relationship of time and identity. However, when Humbird is killed in an automobile accident, his image changes and appears to be entirely different:

> he was this white mass. All that remained of the charm and personality of

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20. Ibid., pp.86-87.

> the Dick Humbird he had known —— oh, it was all so horrible and unaristocratic and close to earth. All tragedy has that strain of the grotesque and squalid —— so useless, futile ..... the way animals die .... Amory was reminded of the cat that had lain horribly mangled in some alley of his childhood.[21]

Humbird symbolically stands for what the Amory-Fitzgerald personality would have chosen to be, the American artist coming to grips with his American material of adolescence, the brummegem image of the egotist Fitzgerald learnt that the artist could only emerge when the author subordinated his "personality" to his "personage". Thus Humbird's death symbolises the conflict, tension and terror involved in this triumph. But Humbird is hard to kill and later reappears as the devil.

A year after, Amory encounters the devil with Sloan who also was "the centre" with Humbird. What attracts the devil is not petting or drinking. Fitzgerald himself had been the eponymic figure and critic of the "flaming youth". He indicted the fascinating, alluring self-destructive transcendence of life that gay irresponsibility in youthful

21. Ibid., p.96.

adolescence symbolised. Humbird too epitomised the way of life that devours the personage, that can be known and exorcised by repudiation, participation and living. Evil is thus inherent in character and not in the manner. So Amory is pursued by the shadow of the devil, feeling like the scene that Fitzgerald would re-sketch in the El Greco landscape of Nick Carraway's dreaming at the end of The Great Gatsby. The Humbird landscape of Amory's flight is a world of anonymity, the impersonal, mobile and flighty world of transitory birds of passage, the inhuman urban world of the evil of facelessness, of depersonalisation, where one's transcendent identity loses its human image. This is New York and Princeton. Those streets are unforgettable for Amory fled those streets and down:

> The long street came the moon, and Amory turned his back on it and walked. Ten fifteen steps away sounded the foot steps [of the devil]. They were like slow dripping, with just the slightest insistence in their fall. Amory's shadow lay, perhaps, ten feet ahead of him, and soft shoes were presumably that far, behind. With the instinct of a child Amory edged in under the blue darkness of the white buildings cleaving the

> moonlight for haggard seconds, once bursting into a slow run with clumsy stumblings....
>
> Was everyone followed in the moonlight. But if he met someone good who'd know what he meant and hear this damned scuffle.... Then the scuffing grew suddenly nearer, and a black cloud settled over the moon.... Suddenly he realised that the footsteps were not behind had never been behind, they were ahead and he was not eluding but following....[22]

The devil forewarns Amory from sleeping with the chorus girl and has sexual implication in the pursuing, haunting figure. But it is something present within him, a demon of personality, and is repeatedly identified with the faceless white buildings that symbolise spiritual inertia and desiccation. These visions have obvious sexual overtones and indicate sexual guilt. For Amory "the problem of evil had solidified into a problem of sex".[23] But the disturbance has deeper implications for the whole of "paradise" itself. The evil that Humbird epitomises is the evil of false adolescent

22. Ibid., pp.125-126.

23. Ibid., p.302.

pretensions a world to which Amory makes an absolute surrender, and with it the fallaciousness of the dream, his self, his personage.

> Only far inside his soul a little fire leaped and cried that something was pulling him down, trying to get him inside a door and slam it behind him. After that door was slammed there would be only footfalls and white buildings in the moonlight, and perhaps he would be one of the foot-falls.[24]

Such were the haunting echoes of Amory's conscience where the Humbird devil deracinated his imaginative innocence, and the hot pursuit of the devilish footsteps made him cry out, "I want someone stupid. Oh, send someone stupid!"[25] Perhaps in his mind the association of good with simple native stupidity became a tag of innocence different from the clever, glittering world that had become identified with Humbird the face of personality and therefore evil:

> Then something clanged like a low gong struck at a distance; and before his

24. Ibid., p.126.

25. Ibid., p.127.

> eyes a face flashed over the two feet, a face pale and distorted with a sort of infinite evil that twisted it like flame in the wind; but he knew, for the half instant that the gong tanged and hummed, that it was the face of Dick Humbird.[26]

The face of Humbird gave him a sense of security. He felt safe in the recognition of this personage-idol, whose impeccable social virtues Amory emulates in his self-surrender. Humbird is the true stamp of American aristocracy. The perfect model of the upper middle-class gentility. But Amory was disillusioned after he learned the truth. He himself was a member of this elite aristocracy and his experience would keep him free from falling into the pattern of false upstarts like Humbird. Yet the truth of Humbird's background fails to tarnish his image as a man of exceptionally fine qualities of mind and heart and his character thus remains unquestioned. The reasons of his death, however, evidence excessive pride and inordinate stubbornness as his reckless irresponsibility which eventually destroyed him. He is betrayed by his inner falsity. He dies inevitably as an anachronism, as the values of a dying order that could not survive the onslaught of change.

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26. Ibid., p.127.

The reappearance of Humbird in the devil episode with the symbolic images of death and decay fire and Hell — the white calcium pallor of the streets and houses where the show girls live, where temptation and seduction move like warm winds, where the divan is "alive like heat waves over asphalt, like wriggling worms". Gradually there builds up the climactic moments in the deathly face of Humbird which Amory sees and which symbolises a facial expression "pale and distorted with a sort of infinite evil". For his recklessness and irresponsibility Humbird gains his hell. Amory is saved this fate by knowing the face of evil in Humbird's distorted visage, but he suffered a hard fate in having been denied what he conceived to be the ideals of "aristocratic egotism."

There are varied interpretations of the "devil" episode. Milton H. Sterne thinks it to be a remnant of Fitzgerald's Catholic sensibility or of his Irish mysticism. He goes on to argue that if seen in its proper function as an attempt to dramatise rather than merely sermonise the theme of evil in the novel, the episode is perfectly explicable. It is not only Amory who sees the devil; Tom D'Invilliers too sees it; thereby the presence is externalised into the literal narrative where it does not really belong either in event, attitude or tone. It is symbolic and an example of surrealism. His use of fantasy or the fabulous has either

been neglected or misinterpreted. He used it in a number of short stories: "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button", "Tarquin of Cheapside" "A Short Trip Home", "O Russet Witch'", "One Trip Abroad", "The Adjuster", "The Conquest of America", "The Room With Green Blinds", "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz". There is an interplay of tension between the sense of a real world and an anti-world of the implausible or outlandish often grotesque and bizarre. There is a compulsion to arrest, rearrange or alter time whereby his vision is imposed upon reality. This hyperbolic treatment or mimesia can also induce temporary euphoria. Seen in the light of Freudianism, it can be day-dreaming:

> dreams of a metamorphosed reality are emotional and social necessities which we cannot help but indulge, and that they are in another sense insubstantial, ludicrous, pathetic. In this respect fantasy was well-suited to mirror Fitzgerald's complex attitude towards his time.[27]

Buell further calls him the forerunner from Nathanael West to Donald Bathelme:

27. Lawrence Buell, "The Significance of Fantasy", The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Jackson R. Brijes, p.34.

> who have established what mail well come to be recognised as the main current in late twentieth century American fiction.[28]

Thus Fitzgerald is not only recognised as a novelist of manners, a faithful chronicler of his times, a highly sensitive writer with deep moral convictions but also a confirmed fabulist of his age. It has now been generally acknowledged that he used surrealism as early as 1920. This he called his "second manner" or "new manner". However, it turned out to be a catastrophic failure so he gave it up, rather sublimated it.

The Devil Episode is primarily important not only "for its warning against the sexual enticements of show-girls like Axia Marlow.... [but] for its effort to exorcise the appeal, and the threat of Dick Humbird's wealth, personality and charm".[29] In the final analysis, it must be retrieved from its allegiance and an image both complementary and opposite must replace the one of Humbird. That image of the good angel is provided by Burne Halliday. He was:

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28. Ibid., p.37.

29. Robert Sklar, The Last Laocoon, p.48.

> broad-browed and strong-chinned with the fineness in the honest gray eyes that were like Kerry's, Burne was a man who gave an immediate impression of bigness and security ... stubborn, that was evident, but his stubbornness wore no stolidity, and when he talked for five minutes, Amory knew that his keen enthusiasm had in it no quality of dilettantism.
>
> The intense power Amory felt later in Burne Halliday differed from the admiration he had for Humbird. This time it began as purely a mental interest. With other men whom he had thought as primarily first-class' he had been attracted first by their personalities, and in Burne he missed that immediate magnetism to which he usually swore allegiance.[30]

Burne not only symbolises the new social change overtaking America in the aftermath of the War, but also provides a fresh perspective into the perniciousness of American wealth, its "meretricious beauty", its deadly thrust of

30. F. Scott Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, pp.134-35.

pushing the possessor, onto the precipice from where he must fall and perish. Humbird was that victim of ill-beggotten wealth and sudden social transcendence. Burne belongs nowhere; the centre of his life is not the top, reaching which the person is destroyed; he is a personage, a non-personality: this is his identity and his "sanity that enabled [him] to stand against all traditions".[31] Burne's scorn of the establishmentarian prestige and status, his urge for social service, reform and chance, all help him to remain firm and unbroken to the end. Through him we are made to realise that goodness is not stupidity, and the sham and hypocrisy of status-seeking is the real evil.

But Burne slips out of Amory's memory. It is the Humbirds who linger and return repeatedly but in various metamorphoses. Burne splits with Amory for he rejects the superman Nietzschean dynamism which Amory applauds and thinks of Allied effort in the war "as the great protest against superman". Though Amory fails to realise it, the entire social and moral order, the Victorian values and arrangements were questioned by the War; far from preserving the old values, Amory's going to war would only remove the obstacles to the new and emerging social and moral change. Monsignor had perceived it and in "a letter dated January, 1918 .... to Amory, who is a second lieutenant in the 171st

31. Ibid., p.136.

Infantry, Port of Embarkation, Camp Mills, Long Island" he wrote:

> This is the end of one thing: for better or worse you will never again be quite the Amory Blaine that I knew, never again will we meet as we have met, because your generation is growing hard, much harder than mine ever grew, nourished as they were on the stuff of the nineties.[32]

The war to which Amory and his generation had gone, presaged a time of anarchy and disorder. The America that they return to is not the one they had left. During Amory's interlude overseas American society had been altered. War serves as a step in Amory's education to make his experience more authentic though it does not shape that experience.

War stands as a symbolic intermission between Amory's deprivation of his place in American aristocracy and what had given him his exceptionally superior attitude, his "aristocratic egotism". It has taken away the already melting family fortune. He is now poor and belongs to the petite bourgeois world. All the prospects of wealth having

32. Ibid., p.171.

been wiped out with the death of his mother during his European sojourn. He attempted:

> to put the blame for the whole war on the ancestors of his generation.... all the people who cheered for Germany in 1870..... All the materialists rampant, all the idolizers of German science and efficiency.....Tennyson....a representative of the Victorians.... Victorians who never learned to weep. Who sowed the bitter harvest your children go to reap.[33]

However, after Amory goes to the war, no exploits, skirmishes are mentioned so that Edmund Wilson rightly criticised him in a letter:

> If you thought you couldn't deal with his military experience you shouldn't have had him go abroad at all.... I really think you should cultivate detachment and not allow yourself to drift into a state of mind where, as in the later part of the book, you make

33. Ibid., p.164.

> Amory the hero of dramatic encounters with all the naive and romantic gusto of a small boy imagining himself as a brave hunter of Indians.[34]

In the new world order, the advantages and expensive proposition that wealth could command, are losing their hold and their lustre. The young debutante must marry wealth which her imagination needs to create a sphere in which she can use it. Rosalind Connage pushes that harsh reality in the face of Amory when she decides to give him up for Dawson Ryder who says she'd learn to love him. Ryder was "reliable" and she felt he'd be a "background"; he was a good man and a strong one. He had promised to give a poor little boy an Indian suit and had kept his promise. That made her realise that he'd be nice to their children, take care of them, and she wouldn't have to worry.

The Humbird image reappears with a more intense insistence in the image of the Golden Girl ... Isabelle, Rosalind, Eleanor and their later descendants, Daisy in The Great Gatsby and Rosemary and Nicole in Tender Is The Night. All like Humbird have their immediate acceptance in being the centre of adoration of beauty and youth, of adulation and emulation, but equally of destruction. The quest of romantic

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34. Quoted, Milton R. Sterne, The Golden Moment, p.36.

wonder, of the pursuit of happiness and the very capitulation to the American Dream, tend toward imaginative transcendence of the harsh actuality, of the constrictions put upon by death and temporal fate. But the possibility of perpetual damnation looms perilously close, linked to the very objects of romantic quest:

> The Fitzgerald hero is destroyed by the materials which the American experience offers as objects and criteria of passion and is reduced by his capitulation to them and is chastened and subdued.[35]

The objects of passion, the beautiful and young golden girls, are creations of Fitzgerald's imagination which through a complex alchemy of transmutation, has retrieved Ginevera king and Zelda Sayer from the oblivion of the adolescent fascination into the eternally beautiful and desirable femme fatale, a source of emulation and inspiration but equally of inescapable destruction. Though the object, like the quest itself, is a perennial illusion, it is an inherent privilege of those in the American society who have the required leisure through wealth, and who feel

35. Edwin Fussel, "Fitzgerald's Brave New World", (1952), F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Collection of Critical Essays ed. Arthur Mizener (New Jersey, 1963), p.44.

aesthetic longing, but pursue what will inevitably delude and betray. The disenchantment itself connotes vacuity and irresponsibility on the part of those who have willed themselves to be deluded by such an escape and destruction. James E. Miller thinks that the quest of Amory Blaine is one of the search for "social ideals with an attempt to saturate the novel with glimpses of "the way it really is". This quest motif follows on Compton Mckenzie's Sinister Street, H.G. Wells' The Search Magnificent and Robert Hugh Benson's None other Gods.

A prerequisite of this fairyland is wealth, success in terms of money. Without this glitter of wealth, diamonds and material splendour, the earthly beauty is unimaginable. The dazzle and the glamour are the very symbols of the desirable. Money attains both aesthetic and social connotations. It alone can make the dream possible, the dream of eternal youth and beauty, and can arrest them from possible disillusionment and decay. But in Fitzgerald's imagination what belongs to the aesthetic realm of contemplation is now subjected to corruption through commercialised vulgarity. The kind of "symbolic social novels" that he wrote are different in aim and execution from the naturalistic social novels of Frank Norris and Theodore Dreiser; his are closer to Edith Wharton; even the subjects they deal with: the relationship of beauty and

wealth, the displacement of values, the corruption of American expectations when they shift from social meaning to society. However, the sense of history in Wharton is far denser in form though the substance of history and its imaginatively realised meaning are firmer and more coherent in Fitzgerald. His fictional material is not just autobiography but the appropriate contemporary expression of ancient possibilities and desire. Money, while changing hands, changes class relationships and human values, changes old graciousness for new ostentation; from rags to riches goes beyond the superficial level and affects man's psyche and entire ethos. It is a historical perspective which has meaning and substance. His use of symbols is deliberate and purposeful. An aestheticism of materialistic hedonism, cultural cleavage of American society with its insistent fatality and pervasive spiritual malaise were all tangibly present in the glitter of American wealth as the sense of illusion of its felicity was never absent from his imagination:

> All the stories that came into my head had a touch of disaster in them ... the lovely creatures in my novels went to ruin, the diamond mountains of my short stories blew up, my millionaires were as beautiful and damned as Thomas Hardy's peasants. In life these things hadn't happened yet, but I was

> pretty sure living wasn't the reckless, careless business these people thought.[36]

Fitzgerald was thus trying to comprehend the deeper meaning of the American experience even as he was indicting the Jazz Age and a whole race gone hedonistic with a trivial and immature lust for pleasure, spelling the end of Columbus' dream, the very doom of the voyage of discovery. The imagery is persistent and compels into submission the very ruinous quality of American life because of its plutocratic ambitions that Fitzgerald found reason to despise and reject even though he himself was lured by its false but dazzling facade. The imagery from an early story" May Day" has deep symbolic import and was to be followed up in The Great Gatsby:

> The great plate-glass front had turned to a deep creamy blue.... Dawn had come up in Columbus Circle, magical breathless, dawn silhouetting the great statue of the immortal Christopher, and mingling in a curious uncanny manner

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36. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Early success" (1937), The Crack Up, ed. Edmund Wilson (New York, 1956), p.87.

> with the fading fellow electric light inside.[37]

The brutalization of the dream in a rage for disorder is made clear by this powerful image. The ironic contrast of the quest that urged Columbus to this "new world" and what the inheritors of that dream turned it into, the meretriciousness and sheer vacuity, the vast and vulgar shallowness is glaring and compelling.

Such are also the implications of the pursuit and wooing of the golden girl, of the charisma of love, beauty and youthful innocence. The quest and the attainment are imperative even when the winning becomes a destructive triumph' the efforts reduced to ashes; the absorption of the seeker into the ideal, the ritual must be undergone for winning of the golden girl is symbolic of the winning of America; it is a symbol of the golden west, the Frontier the receding ideal' though to Fitzgerald's generation, the "Westward Ho" had begun to absorb the Eastern cities, New York with its desiccated streets, pallour of death and destruction (This Side of Paradise), housing the Eastern Princess of the golden American West: high in "the white

37. Scott Fitzgerald, "May Day" (1920) The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Malcolm Cowley, p.105.

palace is the king's daughter, the golden girl" (The Great Gatsby).

In Fitzgerald's world the golden girl never stands for sexual triumph. She symbolises status and being. His novels are conspicuously free from erotic fantasies. This is remarkable in an age which was celebrating sexual freedom with great exuberance and he was its most vocal spokesman. The golden girl lures her lovers on, like America itself, with a "voice.... full of money".[38] She is "the phallic woman with a phallus of gold".[39] Even though her fairy glamour is illusory she remains magical to entice and lure; she is the golden idol, the soul of wealth as well as of America, and both are no longer innocent. This lost innocence is what leads to corruption and ultimate destruction. Possession of wealth makes her aggressive for like the wealthy she can retreat into her money once the devastation is complete. The moment of beauty and illusion can be kept alive, and indefinitely extended because wealth gives a sense of "raw ostentation.... of privilege existing outside the reach of moral responsibility [and confers a freedom] beyond any moral calculations".[40] The rich were responsible for the decline of national morality. Fitzgerald

38. F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby, p.91

39. Leslie A. Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel (New York, 1960), p.301.

had transmuted them into that symbol of the decade's incredible truth.

> Fitzgerald did not worship riches or the rich; he merely lived in their golden eye.... they became for him what war became for Hemingway, or the anarchy of modern society for Dos Passes ... the pattern of human existence, the artist's medium of understanding.[41]

The golden girl legend found its must appropriate expression in the "flapper" of Fitzgerald's generation which almost became a myth. The post-war American "La belle dame sans merci" who became a dispersive social force, insolent and full of Amazonian energy was impelled by her new desire to reject the traditional institution of marriage which she found futile; she found motherhood also inane intolerable, a menace to her beauty. Her sense of freedom, informality and existential urge for experience made her more audacious, capricious and extravagant. The golden girl in This Side of Paradise attains a generic role. Fitzgerald carefully sets

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40. Fredrick J. Hoffman, The Twenties (New York, 1955), pp.108-109.

41. Alfred Kazin, On Native Grounds (New York, 1942), pp.319-320.

her with a surface froth of emotions but lacking in depth with an inability for a meaningful, permanent relationship. Amory had wanted something lasting. He knows:

> The "belle" had become the "flirt", the "flirt" had become the "baby vamp". The "belle" had five or six callers every afternoon. If the P.D. (Popular Daughter), by some coincident, has, two it is made pretty uncomfortable for one who hasn't the date with her.... Try to find P.D. between dances, just try to find her.
>
> The same girl.... deep in an atmosphere of jungle music and the questioning of moral codes. Amory found it rather fascinating to feel that any popular girl he met before eight he might quite possibly kiss before twelve.
>
> "Why on earth are we here?" he asked the girl with green combs one night as they sat in someones's limousine, outside the Country Club in Louisville.

"I don't know, I'm just full of the devil".

"Lets be frank ...we'll never see each other again. I wanted to come out here with you because I thought you were the best-looking girl in sight. You really don't care whether you ever see me again, do you?"

"No .. but is this your line for every girl? What have I done to deserve this?"

"And you don't feel tired dancing .... You just wanted to be .... "

"Oh lets go in", she interrupted, "if you want to analyse. Let's not talk about it".[42]

With his moral earnestness Amory recoils from mere promiscuity. Henry Dan Piper comments that he suffers from an inability to cope with the feminine mind inspite of his outward sophistication; and never is a situation as complicated as it is when a sexual relationship gets involved. This is portrayed through the dramatic renderings

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42. This Side of Paradise, p.66.

in the scenes involving heightened emotional situations like Amory's meeting thirteen year old Myra St. Claire. The girl of Amory's dream is personified in Isabelle:

> She had never been so curious about her appearance, she had never been so satisfied with it. She had been sixteen years old for six months.... Isabelle had been for sometime capable of very strong if transient emotions.... All impressions and infact, all ideas were extremely kaleidoscopic to Isabelle. She had that curious mixture of the social and the artistic temperaments found often in two classes, society women and actresses. Her education or, rather, her sophistication, had been absorbed from the boys who had dangled on her favour; her tact was instinctive and her capacity for love affairs was limited only by the number of the susceptible within telephone distance. Flirt smiled from her large black-brown eyes and showed through her intense physical magnetism.[43]

43. Ibid., pp.67,70.

Isabelle is incapable of love and lasting passions. For Amory this "orgy of sociability" is an initiation into the new ambience of his ideal contentment. He is not in love with her but his pretentious, conventionalised behaviour is a poseur necessary for his adolescent role-playing as an armour against a world that least comprehends Amory Blaine "shorn of illusion and finished with poses".

Amory is a match for Isabelle's "narcissistic poses" and vanity. He can wear a mask of innocence for this world of superficiality and transience:

> Isabelle and Amory were not innocent, nor were they particularly brazen. Moreover, amateur standing had very little value in the game they were playing ..... She had begun as he had with good looks and excitable temperament and rest was the result of accessible popular novels and dressing room conversation culled from a slightly older set ..... Amory was proportionately less deceived. He waited for the mask to drop off, but at the same time he did not question her right to wear it. She, on her part, was not

> impressed by his studied air of blase' sophistication.[44]

His mask serves him well, for he measures up to the shallow world of superficial vanity:

> He had arrived, abreast of the best in his generation at Princeton. He was in love and his love was returned. Turning on all the lights, he looked at himself in the mirror, trying to find in his face the qualities that made him see more clearly than the great crowd of the people, that made him decide firmly, and able to influence and follow his own will. There was little in his life that he would have changed.... Silently he admired himself. How conveniently well he looked.[45]

Amory believed he was in that magic moment when "he was enjoying life as he would probably never enjoy it again", that his self-adulation and romantic egotism had coalesced in such a moment when:

44. Ibid., p.73.

45. Ibid., p.98.

> Everything was hallowed by the haze of his own youth.... "Isabelle", he cried half involuntarily' and held out his arms. As in the story books she ran into them, and on that half minute, as their lips first touched, rested and the high point of vanity, the rest of his young egotism.[46]

Amory is deeply aware of the evanescence of passionate, overpowering moments, a nostalgia consciously identified with youth and beauty and the transience of youthful fantasies. Amory also became aware of the "one vast juvenile intrigue" which had inflicted the youth's morale for ethical rejuvenence. He found girls doing incredible things:

> eating three O'clock, after-dance suppers in impossible cafes: talking of every side of life with an air half of earnest and half of mockery, yet with a furtive excitement that .... stood for a real moral let-down.[47]

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46. Ibid., p.98.

47. Ibid., p.65.

His relationship with Isabelle ends while he rides high on "the crest of young egotism", and that is a moral triumph for him.

Isabelle's spoilt-child behaviour seems undoubtedly outrageous when as the "baby" she embarks upon the adventures of a "vamp". But her seductive designs fail to entice or sway Amory. What Fitzgerald is portraying here is the moral repulsion and horror of the life as emerging in the American city ... the cultural centre ... where the vortex of social life is veering round to the "belle", the "flirt" and the "baby vamp". He is pointing to the contrast, which he stresses in the reversal of values.

In Rosalind, the golden girl "debutante", there is another intellectual and emotional phase in Amory's life. There are her natural prerogatives and her.

> fresh enthusiasm, her will to grow and learn, her endless faith in the inexhaustibility of romance, her courage and fundamental honesty ... these things are not spoiled.[48]

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48. Ibid., p.183.

But she too bears the poisonous fangs of evil, and the quester's enchantment would be short-lived; she would prove an "expensive proposition" for Amory. Her social preferences put a premium on the value of man .... she would marry tons of money someday out of sheer boredom, perhaps because she is "Rosalind Unlimited". This implies retreating into her wealth as Amory doesn't have those resources; he lacks the power to lead her to the emotional paroxysms she is looking for.

Rosalind's passionate love epitomises her desire for a "male to gratify one's artistic taste". Their love too passes through breathless, anxious moments "that any minute the spell would break and drop them out of this paradise of rose and flame". She is a creature of moments and Amory is important for the future of the "next things" only. She represents the Twenties that have lost their moorings. The traditional home has been washed away, and with it the lasting riches of love and spiritual communion which transcends all human passions and ephemeral allurements. She thinks she would fail if she married Amory; she hates the "narrow atmosphere" shut away from the larger world. She gives him up for someone" floating in money":

> I like sunshine and pretty things and I dread responsibility. I don't want to

> think about pots and kitchens and brooms. I want to worry whether my legs will get slick and brown when I swim in the summer.[49]

Thus there is a drifting away from the mainstream; what was once sacrosanct has turned into a sham and humbug; older, gracious living has been devastated and with it the serenity of life. Though she willingly sacrificed him, her feelings at the end are:

> Oh, Amory, what have I done to you? (And deep under the aching sadness that will pass in time, Rosalind feels that she has lost something, she knows not what, she knows not why.)[50]

In his romance with Eleanor Savage it was the "last time that evil crept close to Amory under the mask of beauty". But the veil of evil was misconstrued in the context of "flaming youth"; Fitzgerald's sophomorism seemed dramatised in such an attitude. With Eleanor, Amory's

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49. Ibid., p.120.

50. Ibid., 210.

> imagination ran riot and that is why they rode to the highest hill and watched an evil moon tide high, for they knew then that they could see the devil in each other.[51]

Amory's romance resounds with echoes of Byronic symbolism of the assertion of the romantic will. She appears like "dim phantasmal shapes expressing eternal beauty in curious elfin moods". She betrays a temperament of fierce and disenchanted disposition, contemptuous of mere innocence:

> She had lived in France with a restless mother whom Amory imagined to have been very like his own, on whose death she had come to America, to live in Maryland. She had gone to Baltimore first to stay with a bachelor uncle, and there she insisted on being a debutante at the age of seventeen. She had a wild winter and arrived in the country in March having quarrelled frantically with all her Baltimore relatives and shocked them into fiery protest. A rather fast crowd had come out, who drank cocktails

51. Ibid., p.238.

> in limousines and were promiscuously condescending and patronising toward other people, and Eleanor with an esprit that hinted strongly of boulevards led many innocents still redolent of St. Timothy and Farmington, into paths of Bohemian naughtiness.[52]

Thus she too manifested the malaise of the age, women seeking fulfilment of the flesh. Fitzgerald fails to articulate his moral puritanism and exhibits social puritanism.

If Isabelle appeared balmy and serene, then Rosalind was wild and aggressive, and Eleanor is intellectual and emotional energy sexualised. But at the bottom the instinct is the same; the same drive and motive which are "evil". Her devilish behaviour and "Bohemian naughtiness" seemed the obvious consequences because she herself admits that she is

> hipped on Freud .... but its rotten that every bit of real love in the world is ninety nine percent passion and one little soupcon of jealousy.[53]

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52. Ibid., p.249.

53. Ibid., p.255.

This is the rebellion of the flapper and her reptilian devouring power. She assumes the contemporary symbol of disenchantment, and with her blasphemy tears to shreds the thick cloak of his materialism:

> That's your panacea [the catholic church or the maxims of Confucius], isn't it?.... Oh, you're just an old hypocrite too. Thousands of scowling priests keeping the degenerate Italians and illiterate Irish repentant with gabble about sixth and ninth commandments. Its just all cloaks, sentiment and spiritual rouge and panaceas. I'll tell you there is no God, not even a definite abstract goodness; so its all got to be worked out for the individual by the individual here in high white foreheads like mine, and you're too much the prig to admit it". She let go her reins and shook her little fists at the stars.[54]

No wonder then that the next moment she is prepared to jump off the cliff and while she is saved her horse dies. She is

54. Ibid., p.256.

the externalised personality of Amory; their backgrounds, tastes and temperaments are the same:

> They seemed nearer, not only mentally, but physically, when they read, than when she was in his arms and this was often, for they fell half into love almost from the first.[55]

Like Amory, she too considers herself an intellectual on the brink of destruction. Meeting her is like coming to realise his own self:

> He had never met a girl like this before .... He didn't at all feel like a character in a play, the appropriate feeling in an unconventional situation ... instead, he had a sense of coming home.[56]

For Isabelle he was too much of an "analyser" a thinker; for Rosalind he was too "romantic", for Eleanor, he is:

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55. Ibid., p.248.

56. Ibid., p.245.

> Stupider than I am .... I'm too bright for most men, and I have to descend to their level and let them patronise my intellect.... I'm not sentimental .... I'm as romantic as you are.[57]

This in itself is fatal because as the "fundamental" Eleanor emerges which is the personality of Amory, things change:

> Their love waned slowly with the moon.... For a minute they stood there, hating each other with a bitter sadness. But as Amory had loved himself in Eleanor so now what he hated was only a mirror. Their poses were strewn about the pale dawn like broken glasses.[58]

The figures of Isabelle Rosalind and Eleanor are all trans figured evils of the gilded world of false appearances, shorn of all moral commitment and unfettered for taste of impulsive moments. They symbolise a distillation of their own personalities in Amory's self. They represent the very moral puritanism that "provincial squeamishness" which

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57. Ibid., p.256.

58. Ibid., p.258.

anticipates the Buchanans and their golden, irresponsible world of impulse rejected by Fitzgerald:

> They were the careless people, Tom and Daisy .... They smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made.[59]

In its ultimate symbolistic significance, the very diabolical beauty and malevolent irresponsibility, and, in its devilish savagery and lack of conscience, Eleanor, the golden girl, is the vampire in the ghostly figure of Humbird who inhabited "the dark night of the soul" that Amory tries to exorcise. But she is also the most alluring vision on the American social landscape ... the corrupting annihilating vision that has shattered all hopes of Columbus' brave new world.

Clara did not somehow fit into the fabric of evil; her angelic image made her different. Even "Amory wasn't good enough for Clara, Clara of his ripply golden hair, but then no man was". Her harried life from sixteen on may alone have

59. The Great Gatsby, p.136.

had an affinity with the golden girls other wiser the movement of her life was contrary to theirs; her convent education is partly responsible for this.

> When Amory found her in Philadelphia he thought her steely blue eyes held only happiness; a latent strength, a realism, was brought to its fullest development by the facts that she was compelled to face. She was alone in the world with two small children, little money.... She could do the most prosy things.[60]

She symbolises that moral still-point from which others can be measured in a world in flux. That compels Amory to confess in a trembling voice, "I think.... that if I lost faith in you I'd lose faith in God". She seems to attain her strength from certain heights: "She drew down to herself when she knelt and bent her golden hair into the stained-glass light". However, she could have joined the "damned" tribe "if the lord had just bent [her] soul a little the other way". She is a perfection unrealised in a material world. Little wonder then that she was introduced to Amory through Monsignor Darcy. She has never been in love, she confesses to Amory who

60. This Side of Paradise, pp.150-51.

> realised slowly how much she had told him.... never in love.... She seemed suddenly a daughter of light alone. His entity dropped out of her plane and he longed only to touch her dress with almost the realisation that Joseph must have had of Mary's eternal significance.[61]

She is a fleshless ideal, an embodiment of the anti-vamp. of moral depth. She is unreal in a world of false appearances and moral vacuum. His ultimate painful realisation is that the "real" is the unreality of the world while foul is fair; perfection is unreal. Such creatures are ethereal and remain part of the unfulfilled promise of that American world.

Amory's search for identity is to be found in his loss of innocence and gain of experience.

> The matron doesn't want to repeat her girlhood ... she wants to repeat her honeymoon. I don't want to repeat my innocence. I want the pleasure of losing it again.[62]

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61. Ibid., p.158.

62. Ibid., p.278.

He confesses to being the product of a "versatile mind in a restless generation", "a fish out of water in too many outworn systems", "in love with change [having] killed his conscience", the result being "self-reproach and loneliness and disillusion", a feeling that

> Life was a damned muddle .... a football game with everyone off-side and the referee gotten rid of ... everyone claiming the referee would have been on his side ....[63]

Thus Fitzgerald the artist faces the moral dilemma of having to champion the youthful rebelliousness of his age, having participated in it and drunk life to the lees with his wife, and yet indict its immoral, hedonistic excesses, repudiating its standards.

> He was in an eddy again, a deep lethargic gulf.... For the first time in his life he rather longed for death to roll over his generation, obliterating their petty fevers and struggles and exultations. His youth seemed never so vanished.... Things that had been the

63. Ibid., p.285.

> merest commonplaces of his life then.... had all flown away and the gaps they left were filled only with the great listlessness of his disillusion.[64]

As the artist, Fitzgerald's exploration of evil and detailing of moral responsibility tends to blur the distinction between what is the real nature of evil and the mere social excesses of whoring, drinking, parties, petting ... a confusion of ethical judgement, of mores and morality. Amory confronts this situation in Atlantic city, where he meets his old Princeton mate, Alec Connage, the brother of Rosalind. In the hotel he gets up to find Alec sleeping with a shop girl. In a moment of reflection the perception of the Humbird -- devil flashes through his mind:

> The first fact that flashed radiantly through his comprehension was the great impersonality of sacrifice ... he perceived that what we call love and hate, reward and punishment, had no more to do with it than the date of the month .... Now he realised the truth: that sacrifice was no purchaser of freedom. It was like a great eclectic office, it

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64. Ibid., p.263.

> was like an inheritance of power ... to certain people at certain times an essential luxury, carrying with it not a guarantee but a responsibility, not a security but an infinite risk. Its very momentum might drag him down to ruin ... the passing of the emotional wave that made it possible might leave the one who made it high and dry forever on an island of despair.[65]

The act of self sacrifice is seized by Amory. He gallantly saves Alec from the house detective: he could have gone to the penitentiary "for bringin' a girl from, one state to 'nother f'r immoral purp'ses" banned by the Mann Act. He is thus released from the evil that had dogged him, and his personality changes into a "personage"; Monsignor had explained to him the difference between "personality" and "personage":

> "A personality is what you thought you were .... a physical matter almost entirely, it lowers the people it acts on ...I've seen it vanish in a long sickness. But while a personality is

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65. Ibid., pp.266-267.

> active, it overrides 'the next thing'. Now a personage, on the other hand, gathers. Hes a bar on which a thousand things have been hung ... glittering things sometimes, as ours are; but he uses these things with a cold mentality back of them".[66]

As Amory makes his choice between keeping his public image intact and an altruistic act which might identify him with the sin of Alec, the ghost of Monsignor watches him from "among the curtains in the room in Atlantic city". What saves him is his self-abnegation, and he begins to be aware of the sense of evil as a loss of innocence, not necessarily what goes with "Bohemian naughtiness". But for him'.

> The problem of evil had solidified into the problem of sex. He was beginning to identify evil with the strong phallic worship in Brooke and early Wells.[67]

He no longer ferreted out the deeper evils in pride and sensuality. Wealth is cleansed of that sin. It is poverty which is rotten: "Its essentially cleaner to be corrupt and

66. Ibid., pp.113-114.

67. Ibid., p.302.

rich than it is to be innocent and poor".[68] He runs the full circle of his quest to find the wealthy corrupt and corrupting as the most fascinating inhabitants of the golden world ... a story that revolves the thematic wheels of his short stories and novels.

The "romantic egotist" has been metamorphosed into a "personage" and the streets of New York stress the new phase of life he has entered opening new horizons for him. He now wants "to clamor life-ward", and even New York life becomes baptismal for its curative, regenerative powers. As stated earlier the awareness of Monsignor's death gives him a new impetus to act in earnest towards a purpose by giving "people a sense of security". Monsignor had impressed upon him that a personage gathered his accomplishments as possessions, and what constituted self-preservation was order and stability not drifting and chaos.

Amory altered the image replacing it by self sacrifice and altruism, giving a new dimension to his experience: "It is not life that is complicated, its the struggle to guide and control. That is his struggle".[69] The gesture of revolt is replaced by commitment and he gives a new meaning to social

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68. Ibid., p.274.

69. Ibid., p.292.

perspective in terms of human values in order to usher in a social transformation.

Amory had lived in a disillusioned world with the feeling that "life was a damned muddle;" and, in search for values, he knew that" man in his hunger for faith will feed his mind with the nearest and most convenient food". His contemporaries fed themselves on the adolescent dreams culminating in the newly emancipated "flapper", the golden girl with youth, beauty, money, and brains enough to brush the banalities of poverty under the carpet or in someone else's backyard. Fitzgerald sums up the golden girl concept in Amory's innocent dream:

> Women ... of whom he had expected so much; whose beauty he had hoped to transmute into modes of art; whose unfathomable instincts, marvellously incoherent and inarticulate, he had thought to perpetuate in terms of experience ... had become merely concretions to their own posterity. Isabelle, Rosalind, Eleanor, were all removed by their very beauty, around which men swarmed, from the possibility of contributing anything but a sick

> heart and a page of puzzled words to write.[70]

But the sickness and surfeit of self-indulgence had at its core a moral vacuum equal in proportion to the ethical and emotional repression of an earlier era. After discovering himself, he can authentically proclaim a social puritanism with a moral fervour:

> Inseparably linked with evil was beauty ... beauty, still a constant, rising tumult; soft in Eleanor's voice, in an old song at night .... Amory knew that every time he had reached toward it longingly it had leered out at him with the grotesque face of evil. Beauty of great art, beauty of all joy, most of all beauty of women.
>
> Afterall, it had too many associations with license and indulgence. Weak things were often beautiful, weak things were never good.[71]

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70. Ibid., p.283.

71. Ibid., p.302.

He had realised that weak things ought to be transcended, and one can be unselfish and acquire poise and balance in life. He had fallen a victim to his "own pretentiousness of inexperience".

In the New York reportage Amory seems an indefatigable and fascinated observer of life in its dregs ... poverty and sufferings, the revolutionary mutterings of the poor working classes, simultaneously with the contrasting poles of crass vulgarity of the prosperous upper class and pompous irresponsibility and inefficiency of the American aristocracy. From this small enclosure which he views with dismay and horror, Amory moves to greater labyrinths.

Socialism seems of interest to him because of its unconventionality; its a convenient ploy for asserting his new-found freedom. Also, perhaps, that such ideologies seem attractive to them whom riches have eluded. His militant faith in this ideology is out of sympathy for his American experience:

> Even if, deep in my heart, I thought we were all blind atoms in a world as limited as a stroke of a pendulum, I and my sort would struggle against tradition; try, atleast, to displace old

> cants with new ones. I've thought I was right about life at various times, but faith is difficult. One thing I know. If living isn't seeking for the Grail it may be a damned amusing game.[72]

But he can no longer be deluded by false sentimentality and his romantic imagination. What he envisions in his vague socialism is that he is a personage among floating personalities. When he looked about him at the spires and Gargoyles there was the shock of discovery and recognition:

> The spirit of the past brooding over a new generation; the chosen youth [of Princeton] from the muddled, unchastened world, still fed romantically on the mistakes and half forgotten dreams of dead statesmen. Here was a new generation, shouting the old cries, learning the old creeds through, a revery of long days and nights: destined finally to go out into that dirty gray turmoil to follow love and pride: a new generation dedicated more than the last to a fear of poverty and the worship of

72. Ibid., p.291.

> success; grown up to find all Gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken.[73]

The struggle had been worthwhile and he had also found a substitute though a poor substitute:

> There was ever the pain of memory; the regret for lost youth ... yet the waters of disillusion had left a deposit on his soul, responsibility and a love of life, the faint stirring of old ambitions and unrealised dreams.[74]

In a dramatic gesture "he stretched out his arms to the crystalline, radiant sky. 'I know myself', he cried, 'but that is all'" This lonely, desperate defiance is an articulate "gesture of indefinite revolt" according to Edmund Wilson. It is a recognition and assertion that in a world absent of all value, art is the only hope of personal salvation. Fitzgerald's generation was uprooted and cut off from the past, "the lost generation".

Wandering between two worlds:

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73. Ibid., p.304.

74. Ibid., po.304.

> One dead, the other powerless to be born.[75]

Education should equip them "to think clearly, concisely, and logically, freed of his habit of taking refuge in platitudes and prejudices and sentimentalisms".[76]

The significance of the novel's quest for Amory and Fitzgerald is the dream of regaining paradise with the knowledge that:

> The expected Utopia was lost in the golden moment in which it was obtained, changed a boy brummegem god, through pain and anticipation and nostalgia, into a man and artist.[77]

However, its only an "awful proposition" because its doubtful if his self-knowledge will insulate him against his own vulnerability and a spiritually vacuous moneyed culture of his contemporary society.

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75. Mathew Arnold, "Scholar Gypsy", Fifteen Poets, ed.
76. This Side of Paradise, p.298.
77. Milton R. Sterne, The Golden Moment, p.106.

The relevance of This Side of Paradise is its contemporaneity. The content is both thin and derivative. But what Cyril Connoly said of Compton Mackenzie's Sinister Street could befit an evaluative assessment of Fitzgerald's first novel:

> [it is] important because it is the first of a long line of bad books, the novel of adolescence, autobiographical, romantic, which squandered the vocabulary of love and literary appreciation, played into the hands of.... Literary Puritans.... It popularised .... literature as a pool of Narcissus into which gazes the romance of prostitution, of priests.... It is a pastiche of the Pater, of Marins the Epicurean and the Wilde of Dorian Gray.... it is the prose of Rupert Brooke...."[78]

It has these elements and more. Its underlying purpose, its prefatorial anticipations set the tone of Fitzgerald's later and more significant works, defining the American quest for identity. Besides the explorations of the American

78. Cyril Connoly, The Enemies of Paradise, p.39.

adolescent experience are not only topical but universal and refreshing. He acknowledged:

> My idea is always to reach my generation. The wise writer, I think writes for the youth of his own generation, the critics for the next, and the school masters of ever afterwards.[79]

Through his literary imagination Fitzgerald captured and dramatised the fever and fret of his age. It was essential to his perception of reality to apprehend its emotional content and to realise that adolescence was an artistic pose rather than something lacking maturity. Moreover, the sense of nostalgia accompanying innocence added a new dimension to the awareness and reactions of the youth to their experience, and Fitzgerald's achievement as a social critic. This Side of Paradise continues to be a part of the composite maturer novels, The Great Gatsby and Tender is the Night. The motif of Amory as a modern Icarus, over-reaching with regard to ambition and disillusion thereby taking the plunge into ruin is the thread woven through Fitzgerald's other novels. His later protagonists are like sphinxes arising out of the ashes of Amory. He continues in

79. Mathew Brucolli:, Some Epic Grandeur, p.140.

the collective consciousness of Gatsby, Dick Diver and Monroe Stahr for his unsuspecting innocence is the adolescent prison within which the entire gamut of American experience is evaluated, in which the present is sifted in the winnowing scales of the past.

The novel thus looks back to the end of an era though it equally stands on the threshold of another, and can be seen as a preface to the novel of ideas which was about to make its mark on the American scene. The quotation from Rupert Brooke suggests the title of the book:

> ... Well this side of Paradise!...
> There's little comfort in the wise.

It is dedicated to Sigourney Fay i.e. Monsignor Darcy who remained a close friend of Fitzgerald's until his early death at forty-three in 1919. Before Fitzgerald enlisted Father Fay had proposed to take him abroad as part of a complicated mission from American Catholics to the Pope.

In the final analysis <u>This Side of Paradise</u> marks Fitzgerald's transition from a short story writer and would be poet to an ambitions novelist. He thought of himself as a novelist and saved his best work for his novels. He:

> atleast [took] his scattered literary effusions and his undescribed experiences, sifted them, shaped and reshaped them, often looked at them ironically, and fashioned them into a sustained narrative.... The novel took the bold step that Fitzgerald needed.... It helped.... Thrash out those "ideas still in riot"... his ideas about love and women, about the Church, about his past, about the importance of <u>being</u> as contrasted with <u>doing</u> .... [It] has Fitzgerald's own stamp: The naivete and honesty.... 'that goes into my books so that people can read it blind like Braille'.... Finally, though Fitzgerald places his twin hopes of money and the girl in the books success, the book is not merely contrived to achieve these aims.[80]

The novel is prefaced with another quotation, and this time from Oscar Wilde, "Experience is the name so many people give to their mistakes", Amory Blaine being no exception to this, struggling to avoid the other side of Paradise.

80. Kenneth Eble, <u>F.Scott Fitzgerald</u>, p.50.

CHAPTER III

FAILURE AND DISENCHANTMENT

I sigh the lack of many I sought,

And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste.

(William Shakespeare)

CHAPTER III

Failure and Disenchantment

More than a lament for the lost youthful innocence and exhausted moral resources in futile material pursuits, The Beautiful and Damned (1922) is a scathing satire on a society shamelessly climbing a climbing wave; wealth seems to be the magic key that will unlock all doors. Thus the novel is a statement of slow and painful but irreversible disintegration of youthful American expectations as represented in "the activities of actually or potentially wealthy wastrels", the pathetic protagonists, Anthony and Gloria Patch. The severe indictment is not simply inspired by a fear of "an atavistic return to a cruder era of capitalism" but the cultural facade that it has corrupted and vulgarised, making the cultural affinities superficial and innocent expectations insubstantial. Profligacy of the youth was symptomatic of a deeper malaise. The novel is an indictment of a ruthlessly acquisitive business civilization thrown off its balance by disquieting tremors of socio-economic upheavals. His second novel was pruned and shaped by his vision of waste added to his intellectual and artistic maturity. It provides the most significant commentary on the American Twenties, its contemporary social milieu and the idle rich without any obligations and responsibilities. For all its intellectual resolutions, The

Beautiful and Damned was an exploration of failure and "meaninglessness of life", a different, more serious and less ebullient theme than that of his first novel:

> Since writing This Side of Paradise on the inspiration of Wells and Mackenzie -- Fitzgerald has become acquainted with a different school of fiction: the ironical pessimistic.[1]

The exuberance and confidence of his early stories the questing for meaning of life and its beauty had now yielded to a more sombre mood of failure and decay.

Paradoxically it was Fitzgerald's sense of richness of American society that set him on his voyage of exploring the individual and social experience and making persistent efforts to write a great novel. He expressed to Edmund Wilson at Princeton his ambition to be one of the greatest writers that ever lived. He realised it by examining contemporary experience and its relation to values of the past and to the American Dream:

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1. Edmund Wilson, The Shores of Light (New York, 1952), p.32.

> "The best of America was the best of world.... France was a land, England was a people, but America, having about it still that quality of the idea was harder to utter.... It was a willingness of the heart".[2]

The novel becomes a cogent examination of self and society:

> My new novel, called The Flight of the Rocket concerns the life of one Anthony Patch between his 20th and 33rd years (1918 - 1921). He is one of those many with the tastes and weaknesses of an artist but with no actual creative inspiration. How he and his beautiful young wife are wrecked on the shoals of dissipation is told in the story.[3]

Anthony Patch begins his journey from the gates of Paradise that Amory Blaine had found shut and proceeds through "the shoals of dissipation" "because he could not hope to attain

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2. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Swimmers", The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Malcolm Cowley, p.205.

3. F. Scott Fitzgerald to Charles Scribner II, August 12, 1920, The Letters of F Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Andrew Turnbull (London, 1968), p.163.

the next things". Fitzgerald had earlier accepted the painful truth that just as the world of expectation existed in the imagination of the artist, as a transcendent embodiment deluding social reality, thereby bringing disenchantment, his fictional material, the American youth and wealth could never transcend the American social conditions and circumstances of history. In this sense, The Beautiful and Damned looks "in its paralysis of hope and action .... to the literary hero's existential resignation from society altogether".[4] Anthony Patch makes a symbolic exploration back into the world of paradisiacal conditions without the possibility of redemption because that world is lost. The course of the journey is from the golden West to eastern New York, probing a rudderless society, steering for nowhere and going down the rapids of catastrophe. It is the picture of a gorgeous applecart upset by modern living which is intense and irresponsible. There are layers and layers of social observation but the perception of social change portrayed in This Side of Paradise is missing. The Beautiful and Damned deals with the period 1912 - 1920, and claims to being a social criticism of the American business civilization with its prodigals indulging in unconscionable acts for social elevation, betraying their placelessness and lack of identity in society.

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4. Milton R. Sterne, The Golden Moment, p.117.

This drift into cultural disaster and personal and moral decay of the rich was at the root of disillusionment; but the tragedy has no redemptive value as it fails to illumine the understanding of the characters involved. The older order of traditionally established morality had a durable certainly as compared to the imaginative potentiality of "new freedom" and new values ushered in by commercialism, hedonistic cynicism and ethical dilemma:

> What most distinguishes the generation [of the Twenties] who have attained maturity since the debacle of idealism at the end of the war is not their rebellion against the religion and the moral code of their parents but their disillusionment with their own rebellion. It is common for young men and women to rebel, but that they should rebel madly and without faith in their rebellion, and they should distrust the new freedom no less than the old certainties --- That is something of a novelty.[5]

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5. Walter Lippman, quoted by Frederick L. Allen, Only Yesterday (New York, 1930), p.240.

Inspite of these moral irritants in the American dream of innocent expectations, it is money that ultimately creates the material conditions of wealth which the Fitzgerald hero aspires for; this golden decay is repeatedly dramatised in the novels.

The American metropolitan consciousness is the area explored by Fitzgerald. American cities were the arenas of dramatic conflicts: a clash between the possibilities of imagination and the realities of commonplace metropolitan life; the promises of life, great expectations' were not realised; instead the quester is destroyed like Gatsby when he over-reaches to realise the vision of his ideal self. The Beautiful and Damned is representative of this heightened sensibility and becomes a searching analysis of the lost generation's most disillusioning years, the modes and manners of urban sophistication and its social significance. This society Fitzgerald knew, understood and identified with so that it became the material he dealt with.

Fitzgerald did not show much concern for contemporary world events so that Dos Passes wrote to him:

> I've been wanting to see you, naturally, to argue about your Esquire articles -- Christ, man, how do you find time in the

> middle of the general conflagration to worry about all that stuff?... Most of the time the course of world events, seems so frightful that I feel absolutely paralysed.... We're living in one of the damndest tragic moments in history....[6]

However, when critics accused him of using fictional material that was just personal and single dimensional, he retorted, "But, my God: It was my material, and it was all I had to deal with". Besides, later he recalled the 20s with nostalgia:

> It was borrowed time anyhow the whole upper tenth of a nation living with insouciance of grand ducs and the casualness of chorus girls. But moralising is easy now and it was pleasant to be in one's twenties in such a certain and unworried time.[7]

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6. John Dos Passos in a letter to F. Scott Fitzgerald, quoted Edmund Wilson, ed. The Crack-Up (New York, 1956), p.311.

7. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Echoes of the Jazz Age", The Crack-Up , p.21.

This nostalgia became a form of artistic consciousness for him. He maintained a delicate tension between his own personally felt experience and the social circumstances that impinged upon his artistic consciousness, "The ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function".[8] His delicate perception apprehended the very complexity and dichotomy of the privately cultivated, intensely personal consciousness and the traditionally inherited customs and conventions of society. This conflict is uniquely American and typical of the Jazz Age.

New York of the 1920s was the centre of American cultural change:

> The playground of a younger generation that was tired of Great Causes, at odds with its elders, full of energy stored up by the war, and determined to be amused. Fitzgerald's blend of flippancy and glamour caught the mood of the moment, and so he became, in the words of a contemporary, "our darling, our genius, our fool".[9]

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8. Ibid, p.69.

It was a fairyland, unspoilt and untainted with all the iridescence of the beginning of the world. But it was also "fatal to the imagination" and became a living symbol of the brutalisation of the dream of innocence, "of undergraduate dissipation... alcoholic mist... (and) a betrayal of a persistent idealism".[10] Even though it turns into a nightmare, it could not dissipate his youthful dreams:

> This midnight I aspire
> To see, mirrored among the embers, curled.
> In flame, the splendour and the
> sadness of the world.[11]

It is in this world that Anthony Patch meets his dreams of success, beauty and wealth; and it is here that he drifts nto disaster and doom. Thus there is a disparity between dream and expectation and the harsh actuality of social circumstance. Fitzgerald's glamourisation of New York was his effort to burnish the image of the emerging cosmopolitan sophistication of a city as a symbol of national cultural aspirations where the self-deluded romantic egotists, the elite were forlorn and disillusioned. Three years after the

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9. Andrew Turnbull, Scott Fitzgerald (London, 1970), p.116.

10. F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Crack-Up, p.24.

11. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Princeton -- The Last Day", F. Scott Fitzgerald in His Own Time: A Miscellany, ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli and Jackson R. Bryer, p.62.

publication of The Beautiful and Damned, Fitzgerald wrote to Maria Mannes:

> You are thrilled by New York --- I doubt you will be after five more years when you are more fully nourished from within. I carry the place around the world in my heart but sometimes I try to shake it off in my dreams. America's greatest promise is that something is going to happen and after a while you get tired of waiting because nothing happens to people except that they grow old, and nothing happens to American art because America is the story of the moon that never rose....
>
> The young people in America are brilliant with second-hand sophistication inherited from their betters of the war generation who to some extent worked things out for themselves. They are brave, shallow, cynical, impatient, turbulent and empty. I like them not. The 'fresh, strong river of America'! My God, Marya, where are your eyes --- or are they too fresh

> and strong to see anything but their own colour and contour in the glass? America is so decadent that its brilliant children are damned almost before they are born.[12]

New York had come to stand as a symbol of his own youth and intense longing in Anthony - Fitzgerald's adolescent imagination. The way Anthony plunged into its superficial brilliance and essential futility, and proceeded to conjure up every enticing vision, seemed like a cavalcade of dreams that beguiled his fitful hours offering an escape from reality into the sinister streets of a world of fantasy. He ransacked his imagination for fierce and illicit pleasure. The very "East" of his imagination on which he had lavished such fervent hopes and such gorgeous dreams was no anchor against the shifting tides of his romantic illusions for he continually drifted away in delightful perspectives --- the New York cultural environment which he observed and absorbed and recreated in his fictional imagination. More than that, his observed pattern of unreflecting normality of New York metropolitan scene was only a personal reality of his conscious, earnest contemplation.

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12. Letters, Oct., 1925, pp.507-508.

The very tensions of his age and its intrinsic restlessness focussed onto his anguished sensibility and imagination. His personal disequilibrium incarnated and condensed in the general disequilibrium of his American generation. This almost abnormal acuity of response to the social and cultural malaise of his age was the result of his sharply focussed sensibility to the movements of his time. The edge of his romantic perception, of what money and beauty could symbolise, was sharpened by his intensely nature ennui for inspite of his festering discontent he realised the futility of rebellion even aesthetic rebellion, which assuaged his desires by a despairing compensation of an indefinite gesture of revolt.

Fitzgerald had resolved to embody in his fiction the despair and disillusionment of the youth of his generation. He reconstructed those adolescent desires and aspirations in his fiction by taking the richest episodes of personal experience. He linked them with the lives of those he watched at close quarters and wove these into private family histories as they looped and twisted in the complex fabric of New York society, the very social milieu that nourished his young years and which are recaptured and relived in his memory and imagination. But what he recaptured was the reality of his own imagination and memory, the flamboyant years of wealth and luxury that he and Zelda squandered. He

was attracted by the orgy of glittering allurements of the rich leading futile, meaningless lives of self-indulgence, and New York evolving into a cynosure of social climbers, profiteers, instant millionaires as also vampires and courtesans, the uneasy confusion and dark sombre reality beneath the glittering surface, the lush prosperity that subverted the perennial solidity and traditional superiority of the pre-entrepreneurial American aristocracy. With his involved insight into the life of this American commercial capital, Fitzgerald saw with alarm the headlong rush for easy money and quick rising fortune of amassing wealth only to dissipate it with hereditary restraints being nonexistent. New York had become a "Lost City", of men and women with rootless lives.

The "meaninglessness of life" is the backdrop to the lives of Anthony Patch-Scott Fitzgerald and Gloria -- Zelda. What Hemingway called "festival conception of life" was true of their frivolous, pleasure-seeking pursuits and their tremendous vitality to carry it through. Their existence is silhouetted against:

> The houses gathering and gleaming in the sun, which was falling now through wide refulgent skies and tumbling caravans of light down into the streets. New York,

> he supposed, was home -- the city of luxury and mystery, of preposterous hopes and exotic dreams.[13]

Poised in cool unreality is the very symbolism of its deepening twilight mystery --- a tremendous perspective of low, abominable life, a life smothered by the bars, restaurants and sickening noises:

> The soft rush of taxis.... and laughter, laughter hoarse as a crows, incessant and loud, with the rumble of the subway underneath -- and over all, the revolutions of light, the growings and recedings of light -- life dividing like pearls -- forming and reforming like bars and circles and monstrous grotesque figures out amazingly on the sky.[14]

And all the depressing and stilling sounds of:

> The ebbing, flowing, chattering, chuckling, foaming slow-rolling wave effect of this cheerful sea of people as

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13. The Beautiful and Damned, p.282.

14. Ibid., p.26.

> .... it poured its glittering torrent into the artificial lake of laughter.[15]

The life of New York, with its nocturnal distractions in the snare atmosphere of the salons of the rich, house-parties and hotel dances was all set for self-indulgent dissipation. In the faces of the beautiful bright, intimate and damned, Anthony saw the city decked for an eternal carnival; the jostling evening mass in Time Square was:

> Faces swirled about him, a kaleidoscope of girls, ugly, ugly as sin --- too fat, too lean, yet floating upon this autumn air as upon their own warm and passionate breaths poured out into the night. Here for all their vulgarity he thought, they were faintly and subtly mysterious.[16]

Anthony's hazy mind was incapable of registering real emotions which became more elusive and evanescent as he came to identify himself with this metropolitan crowd. He made feeble endeavours to graft that social experience on the stock of his own emotions which for all his self-mocking,

15. Ibid., p.24.

16. Ibid., p.25.

ironic enthusiasm became the distorted echo of his own desires.

> He caught the glance of a dark young beauty sitting alone in a closed taxi-cab. Her eyes in the half light suggested night and violets, and for a moment he stirred again to that half forgotten remoteness of that afternoon.[17]

Such fatuous superficial glances symbolised lonely, lost souls thrown into the whirlwind of the metropolis looking for distractions. Anthony too looked for a safe niche, away from "The threat of life" that haunted his vacant house.

Anthony Patch whose middle name, Comstock recalled his illustrious name-sake, Anthony Comstock (1844-1915), a crusader against vice and obscenity in American life and literature who was the founder of the society for Suppression of Vice. Anthony himself was nurtured to emulate and "to consecrate the remainder of his life to the moral regeneration of the world" in the line of his grandfather, Adam Patch. This moral earnestness towards "Comstockery" seemed not too immoderate an ambition. While Adam Patch's

17. Ibid., p.25.

money could be used for the sense of safety that its mere contemplation gave to Anthony as it reminded him of his grandfather's "moral righteousness".

> While this money downtown seemed rather to have been grasped and held by sheer indomitable strengths and tremendous feats of will; in addition it seemed more definitely and explicitly --- money.[18]

But it seemed as if Anthony was preparing himself for this high task of reforming society setting his own house in order, before he could undertake to change the murky material of his own surroundings. It was a symbolic orientation of what he wished to escape from in the New York, Fifty-Second-Street apartment:

> In its appointments it escaped by a safe margin being of a particular period; it escaped stiffness, stuffiness, bareness and decadence. It smelt neither of smoke nor of innocence-- it was tall and faintly blue. There was a deep lunge of the softest brown leather with

18. Ibid., p.17.

> somnolence drifting about it like a haze.[19]

Anthony makes efforts to achieve the essential conditions for this possibility which would help him fight evil that was antagonistic to social amelioration, but there's a vast gulf between desire and its fulfilment. He has the resources and also constantly tries to preserve his innocent illusions from being shattered but is reduced by his own debauched fantasy of pallid ethereal creatures with their lush attractions:

> He felt persistently that the girl was beautiful --- Then of a sudden he understood; it was her distance, not a rare and previous distance of soul but still distance, if only in terrestrial yards. The autumn air was between them and the roofs and blurred voices. Yet for a not altogether explained second posing perversely in time, his emotion had been nearer to adoration than in the deepest kiss he had ever known.[20]

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19. Ibid., p.10.

20. Ibid., p.18.

His reactions are convincing of the New York high life of the affluent with his background of a dilettante just out from Harvard, now moving into the bye-lanes of metropolitan culture, to gain experience of the "American show" before he becomes a full participant; this must wait till his grandfather's death leaves him a millionaire.

Certainly, Fitzgerald is not celebrating as rejecting New York and its post-war American culture and values. It is represented through Anthony Patch and Gloria Gilbert who reflect what they cannot redeem, and end up helpless victims in ruinous despair and disillusionment. It was a curiously typical dilemma of the younger generation of Americans, and the ironical pessimistic tone of the book underscores this. The epigraph, "The victor belongs to the spoils" has the unmistaken irony and could serve as a motto for Fitzgerald's life as well. Edmund Wilson made a penetrating incisive comment on the deeper significance of the novel:

> There is a profounder truth in <u>The Beautiful and Damned</u> than the author perhaps intended to convey. The hero and heroine are strange creatures without purpose or method, who give themselves upto wild debaucheries and do not from beginning to end, perform a single

> serious act; but you somehow get the impression that inspite of their madness, they are the most rational people in the book. Wherever they touch the common life, the institutions of men are made to appear contemptible farce of the futile and the absurd; the world of finance, the army, and finally the world of business are successfully and casually exposed as completely without dignity or point. The inference is, that, in such a civilization, the sanest and most creditable thing is to forget organised society and live for the jazz of the moment. And it is not altogether a personal confusion which has produced the confusion of such a book. It may be that we must not expect too much intellectual balance of young men who write books in the year 1921; we must remember that their environment and their chief source of stimulation have been the war, the society, and the commerce of the Age of Confusion itself.[21]

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21. Edmund Wilson, The Shores of Light (New York, 1952), pp. 34-35.

The novel opens when Anthony Patch at twenty-five has already had two years "since irony, the Holy Ghost of this later day, had, theoretically, atleast descended upon him. Irony was the final polish of the shoe. The ultimate dab of the clothes-brush, a sort of intellectual 'There'! -- Yet at the brink of this story he has gone no further than the conscious stage".[22] Perhaps the most scathing and biting touch that Fitzgerald wished to convey occurs at the end of the novel, when, with a telling finality and impact, the authorial ironic recognition is forced on the reader: Thirty million dollars that Anthony and Gloria had spent years waiting for in order to fulfil their dreams, comes at a time when the former loses all interest in the inheritance and is concerned not with money but:

> With a series of reminiscences, much as a general might look back upon a successful campaign and analyse his victories. He was thinking of the hardships, the insufferable tribulations he had gone though. They had tried to penalise him for the mistakes of his youth. He had been exposed to ruthless misery, his very craving for romance had

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22. The Beautiful and Damned, p.3.

> been punished, his friends had deserted him --- even Gloria had turned against him. He had been all alone --- facing it all.[23]

The American decadence which Fitzgerald delineates as the theme of the novel permeates the pathos and grandeur of Anthony's tragic mask. Perhaps it may have been a re-enacting of the personal tragedies of the Fitzgeralds though it could not be a literal rendering of their own muddled lives as he confessed to his daughter:

> Gloria was a much more trivial and vulgar person than your mother. I can't really say there was any resemblance except in the beauty and certain terms of expressions she used, and also I naturally used many circumstantial events of our early married life. However, the emphasis was entirely different. We had a much better time than Anthony and Gloria.[24]

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23. Ibid., pp.448-49.

24. Quoted, Henry Dan Piper, F. Scott Fitzgerald (London, 1965), p.92.

Even Anthony's eventual sinking into alcoholism and Gloria's fading out of existence as it were --- all are painful echoes of the Fitzgeralds; besides, although the verve which Scott had loved so much in Zelda was gone, she was still his dream girl:

> Gloria without her arrogance, her independence, her virginal confidence and courage, would be the girl of his glory the radiant woman who was precious and charming because she was ineffably, triumphantly herself.[25]

Fitzgerald himself was only twenty-five, young, glamorous, emancipated -- "lived selfishly and hedonistically after the mode of the rebellions youth and ended up desperate and degraded" like Anthony Patch. Referring to the use of this very personalised artistic material, Paul Rosenfield remarks:

> The world of his subject matter is still too much within Fitzgerald himself for him to see it sustainedly against the universe. Its values obtained too strongly over him, and for that reason

25. The Beautiful and Damned, pp.201-2.

> he cannot set them against those of high civilization and calmly judge them so. Hence, wanting philosophy, and a little over-eager like the rest of America to arrive without having really sweated, he falls victim to the favorite delusions of the society of which he is a part, tends to indulge in its dreams of grandeur, and misses the fine flower of pathos.... By every law The Beautiful and Damned should have been a tragedy, the victims damned indeed: Yet at the conclusion Fitzgerald welched, and permitted his pitiful pair to have the alleviations of some thirty million dollars, and his hero tell the readers he had won out.[26]

Years later Fitzgerald seemed to explain the price for professional work:

> You've got to sell your heart, your strongest reactions, not the little minor things that only touch you

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26. Paul Rosenfeld, "The Beautiful and Damned", F.Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Alfred Kazin (New York, 1951), p.76.

> lightly, the little experience that you might tell at dinner. This is especially when you begin to write... when ... you have only your emotions to sell.[27]

As a conscious artist, Fitzgerald was not endeavouring just to identify his own emotions completely with his artistic material as presented in the novel but using the ironic symbolism in evoking glitter and fascination of wealth as the eternal promise of the golden moment ---- money that allures and fascinates, and is "the next thing" to aristocracy for the Americans who loved and enjoyed Fitzgerald's mythic heaven of money and gave him the place of "our darling, our genius, our fool". However, the Fitzgerald with a mature aesthetic sensibility and ethical code would have scorned and repudiated the magic and spell of thirty million dollars for he had intended in the deterioration of both Anthony and Gloria to make them appear not as individuals but as representatives of their particular culture and way of life. He wrote to Edmund Wilson:

> Gloria and Anthony are representative. They are two of the great army of the rootless who float around New York.

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27. Letters, p.598.

> There must be thousands. Still I didn't bring it out.[28]

Many years later, when his own daughter grew up and would have followed the debutante route to New York high society, he warned her with an artist's censure:

> These debutante parties in New York are the rendezvous of a gang of professional idlers, parasites, pansies, failures, the silliest type of sophomores, young customers' men from Wall Street and hangers on --- the very riff-raff of social New York who would exploit a child like Scottie with flattery and squeeze her out until she is a limp colourless rag.[29]

Fitzgerald could recall Zelda and how the tinsel splendours that allured her and betrayed her dreams had submerged her into eternal depth of despair. The whole tragic pathos is all the more intensified because both Anthony and Gloria as they believe, all clean, pure, without defects, immaculate people who are free of all defilement:

28. Ibid., pp.351-52.

29. Letters, p.343.

> "Tell me all the reasons why you're going to marry me in June", asks Anthony. "Well", Gloria replies, "because you're so clean ... You and I are clean like streams and winds. I can tell whenever I see a person whether he is clean"....
> "We're twins", answers Anthony.[30]

In Gloria's mind, goodness equates itself with cleanliness. In the horror-filled house during that summer when their marriage had all but survived the impending doom, the rustling curtains of their bedroom whisper the disappearance of all that is good:

> Ah, my beautiful young lady, yours is not the first daintiness and delicacy that has faded here under the summer suns .... generations of unloved women have adorned themselves by that glass for rustic lovers who paid no heed. ... Youth has come into this room in palest blue and left in grey garments of despair, and through long nights many girls have lain awake where that bed

30. The Beautiful and Damned, p.131.

> stands pouring out waves of misery into the darkness.[31]

Sun and light are symbols of that cleanliness which defines beauty, youth, goodness, health, life --- the shrine of love; what defines it causes the death of love. "Cleanliness" confers solidity and strength, and neatly divides good and bad. Sex too becomes identified with the horror of evil as Amory Blaine too had discovered:

> Always intensely sceptical of her sex, her judgements were not concerned with the question whether women were or were not clean. By uncleanliness she meant a variety of things, a lack of pride, a slackness in fibre and, most of all, the unmistakable aura of promiscuity.[32]

This fresh, clean glow of her beauty reflects her soul and expresses that "incomprehensible... soul and spirit were one --- the beauty of her body was the essence of her soul". It is an essence of Gloria, "a flash back in Paradise" about to enter "the most opulent, the most gorgeous land on earth"

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31. Ibid., p.234.

32. Ibid., p.194.

and to be transformed into a "susciety girl" in the midst of "bogus aristocrats":

The Voice: That, too you will discover in this land.
You will find much that is bogus...
Beauty: (Placidly) It all sounds so vulgar.
The Voice: Not half as vulgar as it is.
You will be known during your fifteen years as rag-time kid, flapper, a jazz-baby, and a vamp. You will dance new dances neither more nor less gracefully than you danced the old ones.[33]

For Gloria the loss of beauty, innocence and cleanliness is the loss of romantic expectations, of the golden moment in which her youth and happiness are inter-twined with her beauty. All the while that Anthony and Gloria have together longed to be rich after the inheritance, they have created illusions for themselves, but in the process they have ruined and debased their chances of happiness by disfiguring their physical appearance and conditions; they have irretrievably lost youth, beauty and cleanliness -- everything is gone which money could adorn and grace. When they didn't have the money atleast they had each other but

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33. Ibid., p.29.

when they get the money they lose contact. She had yearned for a gray squirrel coat; they couldn't afford it and it "gradually began to stand as a symbol of their growing financial anxiety". However, after winning the suit, she gets a Russian sable coat and is on deck with Anthony; a girl comments:

> "That [coat] must have cost a small fortune.... I can't stand her .... she seems sort of --- sort of dyed and unclean, if you know what I mean. Some people just have that look about them whether they are or not".[34]

They are on their way to Europe to live their futile lives in search of nothingness. After his first visit to Europe, Fitzgerald had written to Edmund Wilson:

> God damn the continent of Europe. It is of merely antiquarian interest. Rome is only few years behind Tyre and Babylon. The Negroid streak creeps northward to defile the Nordic race. Already the Italians have the souls of the blackmoors. Raise the bars of

34. Ibid., p.448.

immigration and permit only Scandinavians, Teutons, Anglo-Saxons and Celts to enter. France made me sick. Its silly pose as the thing the world has to save. I think its a shame that England and America didn't let Germany conquer Europe. Its the only thing that would have saved the tottering old wrecks. My reactions were all Philistine, anti-socialistic, provincial and racially snobbish. I believe at last in the White-man's burden. We are far above the modern Frenchman as he is above the Negro. Even in art! Italy has no one. When Anatole France dies, French Literature will be silly, jealous rehashing of technical quarrels. They are thru' and done. You may have spoken in jest about New York as the capital of culture but in 25 years it will be just as London is now. Culture follows money and all the refinements of aestheticism can't stave off its change of seat. (Christ! What a metaphor) We will be

> Romans in the next generation as the English are now.[35]

However, before the close, there is "a pitiful retching of the soul" at the dread of lost innocence. In the closing scene of the novel, Fitzgerald dramatically refocusses his irony lest reality be distorted:

> The exquisite heavenly irony which has tabulated the demise of so many generations of sparrows doubtless records the subtlest verbal inflections of the passengers of such a ship as the Berengaria. And doubtless it was listening when the young man in the plaid cap crossed the deck quickly and spoke to the girl in yellow.
>
> 'Thats him', he said, pointing to the bundled figure seated in a wheel-chair near the rail. That's Anthony Patch. First time he's been on deck'.[36]

The Beautiful and Damned is essentially a study of American social life at the cross-roads of post-war cosmopolitan

35. Letters, p.346.

36. The Beautiful and Damned, p.447.

consciousness with Anthony Patch as the representative American:

> a distinct and dynamic personality, opinionated, contemptuous, functioning from within outward --- a man who was aware that there would be no honour and yet had honour, who knew the sophistry of courage and yet was brave.[37]

The family background entails aristocratic pretensions to social snobbery and sophistication:

> Anthony drew as much consciousness of social security from being the grandson of Adam J. Patch as he would have had from tracing his line over the sea to the crusaders. This is inevitable; Virginians and Bostonians to the contrary, not withstanding, an aristocracy founded sheerly on money postulates wealth in the particular.[38]

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37. Ibid., p.3.

38. Ibid., p.4.

Such an aristocracy founded on money, without hereditary restraints and culture, is not an aristocracy but a plutocracy. This throws into suspicion the aristocratic virtues shaping characters in the novel, which may have been Fitzgerald's ironic intention. For all his wealth and Harvard education, Anthony emerges as a mere dabbler in aesthetic dilettantism and sentimental pleasure in eroticism. His two friends also betray the same tendencies. Richard Carmel who is a pretentious writer and is a symbolic reflector of Anthony's artistic ambitions; and Maury Noble who is a hopeless cynic. Both have symbolic significance in representing Anthony's passion for creativity and his passive cynicism which tears him apart and fails to resolve his intellectual dilemmas. But as if in answer to his grandfather's subtle and sanctimonious "accomplish something", Anthony believes he can, that:

> he would one day accomplish some quite subtle thing that the elect would deem worthy, and, passing on, would join the dimmer stars in a nebulous, indeterminate heaven half-way between death and immortality.[39]

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39. Ibid., p.3.

Paul Rosenfield rightly diagnosed that he wants "to arrive without having really sweated" for it.

The interim of Anthony's life is a lingering limbo between a past that his family would like to impose but to which he is indifferent except for his grandfather's money that he might inherit, and a future which is negligible in its promise. The feeling of financial security keeps him adrift on his dream and sweat in the routine boredom of the bourgeois and proletariat worlds. The promised millions may further immune him to drudgery from which he has been protected so far but the looming anxiety often blurs that promise. The future inheritance established a mental association of the subtle intellectual accomplishments that Anthony's lofty and delicate sensibility hopes to achieve; its once again the pursuit of imaginary goals and taking away the very consciousness of emancipation.

Money and its appurtenances become a mask for the virtual Edenic fall of the American aspirants for wealth. This is where the amassed riches of Adam Patch became defiled and debased. His wealth was predatory, what had been seized ruthlessly. Adam was an unscrupulous opportunist a veritable robber-baron:

> Early in his career Adam Patch had married an anemic lady of thirty, Alicia Withers, who, brought him one hundred thousand dollars and an impeccable entre into the banking circles of New York.... more popularly known as 'Cross Patch', having left his father's farm in Tarrytown early in sixty-one to join a New York cavalry regiment.... came home from war a major, charged into Wall Street, and amid much fuss, fume, applause and ill-will... gathered to himself some seventy-five million dollars.[40]

His later philanthropic mask exposes his hypocrisy, atleast to himself, after he had grabbed his fortune in the actualities of American moneyed society. His pious pomposity reeks of the falsity of typical American "patriotic gore" in the Horatio Alger myth of success, from rags to riches where wealth becomes a reward for virtue and where the spoils subsume the victor. The American Eden with its pioneering innocence in a state of sinlessness is the symbolic past of Anthony Patch. His grandfather would like to relive the American myth, to preserve and defend the pioneering efforts that have founded and sustained the American dream of

40. Ibid., p.5.

wealth; he wishes that Anthony would persevere and accomplish something.

Adam Patch who is a depraved and unclean debauch leaves and unclean debauch leaves a legacy of the vicious law-suit which in its bitter contest in the law-courts loses its upper crust respectability. It is reduced to sham and degradation, the actual ugly nuance of how the fortune was grabbed for self-aggrandisement and personal glory. But the myth finally shatters the innocent expectations and becomes a nightmare. When Anthony finally inherits the money it is too tarnished and soiled; like the dirt and debauchery that submerges him nothing can remain sacrosanct which the myth contaminates. However, the truth should only remain an enticement of the imagination and not face exposure. Fitzgerald knew what his disillusioned generation wanted: not the story of America where the moon never rose, but the moon, though it wanes and recedes, perpetually glows with a tremulous haze when about to emerge beyond the horizon. Nowhere in Fitzgerald does the dream turn to what it promises, the glitter into gold and the myth into reality but nevertheless the glow of gilded splendour keeps the dream alive; in the final analysis it is only the after-glow which survives in the memory and imagination.

Anthony's ascetic detachment like his aesthetic dilettantism is a strategic camouflage, masking the deep unknown fear of the uncontrollable forces, "the threat to life". It is this vague fear and meaninglessness which are at the core of his deliberate dissipation; the filth and debaucherie that he recoils into are the projections of his inner discontent. In such moments of self-annihilation Maury Noble provides a sense of security amidst the suffocating pressures of life. He could provide the key to life's puzzles and dilemmas:

> "I could quote you the philosophy of the hour --- but for all we know, fifty years may see a complete reversal of this abnegation thats absorbing the intellectuals today, the triumph of Christ over Anatole France ---". he hesitated and then added, "But all I know --- the tremendous importance of myself to me and the necessity of acknowledging that importance to myself -- these things the wise and lovely Gloria was born knowing, these things and the painful futility of trying to know anything else".[41]

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41. Ibid.,257.

Like Amory Blaine at the end of This Side of Paradise", Gloria confesses to Maury Noble, "There is one lesson to be learned from life.... That there's no lesson to be learned from life". But Maury Noble is concerned with self-knowledge as the only knowable object, which by implication, reduces all external values, derived from social experience, to being futile, even non-existent and meaningless. Anthony and Gloria have no imperative moral and social selves as they are characters in decay. In a meaningless world their quest for meaning is impossible; there is neither ecstasy nor agony in their pursuit; nor is their despair tragic.

Anthony's congenital indolence is not the burden of experience but his inexplicable fear of absolute knowledge as meaningless. He expresses this apprehension to Richard Carmel, "I can imagine a man knowing too much for his talents.... It would tend to make me inarticulate". He is aware of what he succumbs to:

> Say I am proud and sane and wise --- an Athenian among Greeks. Well, I might fail where a lesser man would succeed. He could imitate, he could adorn, he could be enthusiastic, he could be hopefully constructive. But this hypothetical me would be too proud to

> imitate, too sane to be enthusiastic, too sophisticated to be Utopian, too Grecian to adorn.[42]

He thus finds justification for his inability and indolence: "I do nothing, for there's nothing I can do thats worth doing... [but wait for] some path of hope.... some purpose yet to be born". He is damned and doesn't belong.

His despair seizes upon the illusions of the glamorous moment of youth and beauty; his falling in love with Gloria is his symbolic escape from his sheer incapacity to resolve his emotional and intellectual dilemmas:

> He no longer craved for the warmth and security of Maury's society which had cheered him no further back than November. Only Gloria could give that now and no one else ever again .... He had realised at last what he wanted --- to kiss her again, to find rest in her great immobility. She was the end of all restlessness all malcontent.[43]

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42. Ibid.,p.36.

43. Ibid.,pp.121, 107.

Gloria Gilbert is Fitzgerald's most complete and energetic debutante, the post-war female apotheosis, the Jazz baby, "the beauty of succulent illusions", the dazzling dream creature fluttering on golden wings, the golden girl free from her impositions and dependence on the male heroes. She is "the radiant woman.... dazzling alight; it was agony to comprehend her beauty in a glance". She is no shadow like Isabelle, Rosalind, Eleanor who impinge on Amory's consciousness which is their sole relevance. She is fully developed and assumes a centrality, becoming more the focus of a point of view than Anthony.

Just as Anthony suffers the authorial damnation of not-belonging to the rich world that had so fascinated Fitzgerald, that had been gaily portrayed by him and that had brushed him aside with indifference, Gloria is idealised to her last possibility as Zelda was. Her total self-centredness, overwhelming instinct for conquest and extraordinary spirit matches Zelda to the last specifications. Fitzgerald endows her with lavish care to redeem and arrest for a moment his dreams for success and happiness he built into the Zelda-Gloria image of glamourised youth and beauty. Zelda's own unwillingness to part with her dazzling irrevocable dreams, her magnificent obsession that made marriage a circumstance for altering the scope of her life have been moulded into the golden image of

Gloria. Two months before the publication of the novel, he wrote to Edmund Wilson, confessing the influence Zelda exercised on him, making it clear how much he owed her for the image of Gloria:

> Now your three influences, St. Paul, Irish (incidentally, though it doesn't matter, I'm not Irish on Father's side --- Thats where Francis Scott Key comes in) and liquor are all important I grant. But I feel less hesitancy asking you to remove liquor because your catalogue is not complete anyhow --- The most enormous influence on me in the four and a half years since I met her has been the complete, fine and full-hearted selfishness and chill-mindedness of Zelda.[44]

He thus tried to inmmortalise Zelda in his works. In his debutante (Gloria), Fitzgerald had admired her zest and courage to be, to seize the moment and live the life of gay irresponsibilities, to have material convenience to fulfil the desire for a life of youthful ease, love and fun --- just what Zelda had written to him before their marriage:

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44. Letters, p.351.

> I don't want to be famous and feted --- all I want is to be very young always and very irresponsible and to feel that my life is my own --- to live and be happy and die in my own way to please myself.[45]

Fitzgerald had fallen in love with her courage, her sincerity and her flaming self-respect, and that was the beginning and end of everything.

Gloria "the Beautiful Lady without Mercy" is pampered and childish to the extent of demanding absurd things to satisfy her whimsicalities:

> Because she was brave, because she was 'spoiled', because of her outrageous and commendable independence of judgement, and finally because of her arrogant consciousness that she had never seen a girl as beautiful as herself, Gloria had developed into a consistent practising Nietzechean.[46]

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45. Quoted, Nancy Milford, Zelda (London, 1974), p.65.

46. The Beautiful and Damned, p.161.

It is this self-indulgence this wanton willfulness that sustains and nourishes her profusely expansive enthusiasm and grand sweep of her glorious and golden radiant moment. Her assertion of virginal independence makes her beauty more charming and desirable to Anthony:

> She was a sun, radiant, growing, *gathering light and storing it --- then* after an eternity pouring it forth in a glance, the fragment of a sentence, to that part of him that cherished all beauty and all illusion.[47]

Her beauty transcends time and nature. The symbolic imagery of the sun makes the illusion more pervasive in the nebulous world of outer existence into which Anthony seeks solace. The sun is constantly and unfailingly there. It breaks "in yellow light through his east window, dancing along the carpet as though the sun were smiling at some ancient and reiterated gag of his own" on the morning of their wedding. Even the gigantic aftermath of their marriage brings in "the loveliness of the June sunlight flooding in at the window", lending colours of delirious excitement to the wild passionate moment of which they are oblivious. In the hour of bliss, Gloria "hung like a brilliant curtain across

47. Ibid., p.73.

[Anthony's] doorways, shutting out the light of the sun". At the end too when he is in the centre of the labyrinth of moral and physical dissolution, the floodgates to wealth open in sunshine. Anthony glances "mechanically out of the window" when asked by Gloria if he would go to the courts. The room was "full of sunshine". Anthony was reluctant, and doesn't go but stares "down blindly into the sunny street". Seeing his former flame, Dorothy Raycroft (Dot) suddenly he flies into a rage and the breaking point is reached. When Gloria and Dick Caramel return from the court bringing the good news of the victory, they find Anthony "sitting in patch of sun on the floor of his bedroom".

> He held up a handful of stamps and left them come drifting down him like leaves, varicolored and bright, turning and fluttering gaudily upon the sunny air.[48]

The imagery of the sun is a spotlight on Anthony as the naturalistic irony and symbolism when he "cracks-up" and regresses to his childhood in the face of triumph.

Gloria has the qualities of the life-giving sunshine though it turns into infertility. It is not conducive to creativity, to fecundity and enhancement of larger life:

48. Ibid., pp.447.

> She knew that in her breast she had never wanted children. The reality, the earthiness the intolerable sentiment of child-bearing, the menace to her beauty -- had appalled her. She wanted to exist only as a conscious flower, prolonging and preserving herself. Her sentimentality could cling fiercely to her own illusions but her ironic soul whispered that motherhood was also the privilege of the female baboon. So her dreams were of ghostly children only --- the early, the perfect symbols of her early and perfect love for Anthony.[49]

She urges no desire; on the contrary she stigmatises life-passion as a sterile and impersonal abstraction, absence of all depth of emotion and voluptuous warmth of feeling. This comes out in what she thinks of her pregnancy:

> "I value my body because you think its beautiful. And this body of mine --- of yours -- to have it grow ugly and shapeless? Its simply in tolerable. Oh,

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49. Ibid., pp.392-93.

> Anthony, I'm not afraid of the pain", Gloria wailed.
>
> He consoled her desperately, but in vain. She continued:
> "And then afterward I might have wide hips and be pale, with all my freshness gone and no radiance in my hair.
> "You'd think you'd been singled out of all the women in the world for this crowning indignity".
>
> "What if I do?" She cried angrily, "It isn't an indignity for them. Its their one excuse for living. Its the one thing they're good for. Its an indignity for me.[50]

When she discovers that she is not expecting afterall she is surprised and elated: "They rejoiced happily, gay again with reborn irresponsibility", and Gloria embraced Anthony "with luxurious intensity, holding it aloft like a sun of her making and basking in its beams". Later, however, when Anthony has recruited and she is alone she hopes that she had had a child. Beauty is unproductive and sterile; it is

50. Ibid., pp.203-4.

illusion and is productive of irresponsibility and sham, and therefore is immoral and evil like Isabelle, Rosalind and Eleanor. Gloria too is beautiful and damned.

She identifies herself with unreal people in that "Brummegem Cabaret" where the women assembled could be "a study in national sociology". Mary Colum wrote that the novel

> reveals with devastating satire a section of American society which has never been recognised as an entity -- that wealthy floating population which throngs the restaurants, cabarets, theatres and hotels of our great city.[51]

It is this obsessive attention to her beauty and appearance that keeps Gloria marvellously alive and happy. The hoped for identity, with money and financial security, with youth and beauty is the symbolic centre of the novel and anticipates The Great Gatsby and Tender Is The Night on magnified scales. All the traits of Glorias personality, her egotistical disdain of bourgeois, middle-class life, her continual search for novel means of pleasure, her pampered

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51. Quoted, Arthur Mizener, The Far Side of Paradise (New York, 1961), pp.152-53.

childishness and irresponsible behaviour are expressions of what projects her in the social limelight.

Gloria's golden dream of perennial beauty and youth is an ephemeral unattainable hope since Anthony cannot strive and struggle for "next things"; money and more money is all that matters and it in turn blunts and bludgeons man's sensitivity and finer perception of beauty. Lack of money brings hysterical collapse and age, signs of decaying youth. When Bloeckman, the movie director informs Gloria that they need a "younger woman" for the role, she writhes in pain and desolation:

> "Oh, my pretty face", she whispered, passionately grieving. "Oh, my pretty face! Oh, I don't want to live without my pretty face! Oh, what's happened?"
>
> Then she slid toward the mirror, and as in the test sprawled face downward upon the floor --- and lay there sobbing. It was the first awkward movement she had ever made.[52]

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52. The Beautiful and Damned, p.404.

Later when Anthony is told about it, he becomes aggressive and wants to hit out at Bloeckman but ends up with a black eye and lost tooth in the bargain. Though, earlier, when the trio were together and the conversation was continuing in "stilted commas", Anthony had been conscious of the throbbing reality that:

> Life was no more than this summer afternoon; a faint wind stirring the lace collar of Gloria's dress, the slow baking browsiness of the verandah .... Intolerably unmoved they all seemed, removed from any romantic imminency of action. Even Gloria's beauty needed wild emotions, needed poignancy, needed death.[53]

However, with the fading of youth and beauty, the golden splendour grows dimmer, to fade inescapably into futility and meaninglessness of life. Wealth is needed as a refuge from this oblivion and extinction to buttress the fading youthful charm. But what money can preserve, it can also destroy: wealth is its own damnation --- this seems to be Fitzgerald's vision of Paradise and its looming horror. What

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53. Ibid., p.214.

is the worth of thirty million dollars after youth, beauty and sanity have gone?

Anthony and Gloria are twins in their unrelieved suffering and loneliness. They both symbolically personify the essence of beauty, and are also its sole betrayers. Love and beauty are incarnate in their figures and there is no alternative to them, to the detached moral perspective which can help clear the debris of this mussed up confusion. But for all its anarchic muddle and disorder they are the most rational people in the novel inspite of their fantastic behaviour.

The significance of the social vision of the novel lies in its symbolising the decadence of the Jazz Age simultaneously with America's coming of age, the burden of experience and responsibility, the end of innocence and exploration of adolescence. The younger generation in post-war America had only a tangential relationship with contemporary society. Infact, the novel should have taken off from where This Side of Paradise left but Amory's willful and ironic self-vanity and imaginative assertion in defining individualism to a more committed social order remains unexplored. Anthony Patch remains a "graceful outsider" with no transcendent ambitions. But the horizon of his life deepens into a rosy glow when he meets Gloria, falls in love with her and invests everything he possesses, his dreams of a legacy and

romantic sensibility, into his dream of Gloria. The eventual struggles and conflict seem to have no apparent moral context because there is no social dimension which can lend meaning and credibility to their quest. They fail to find more enduring resources within each other than the lurking external horror of diffused demoralisation, symbolic of the prevailing deeper malaise:

> Fitzgerald's acute 'environmental sense' has by now become attuned to the destructive impulses of his time, with the result that the internal currents that sweep Anthony and Gloria along to greater and greater dissensions are persistently less important than the disruptive circumstances which surround them.[54]

Anthony Patch makes no efforts to come to terms with life as he finds it though his moods and moments reflect barometric changes of that society. The novel gains in meaning with the vividly imagined Gloria who, with a child's petulant solitary determined will and a willful egotism evokes greater adulation which she demands and gets. They become

54. John Alridge, "Fitzgerald: The Horror and Vision of Paradise", After The Lost Generation (New York, 1951), p.47.

progressively isolated even to the verge of insanity that Anthony lapses into, especially in moments when his being catapulted into a millionaire seems perilously close. Significantly his regression to childhood is his symbolic shrinking from adult responsibility since he is an outsider spiritually, and cannot reintegrate himself into the society with which he should establish meaningful equation and identity.

Anthony and Gloria don't belong to the rich and the world they've dreamed of, and in isolation from their social context they will perish, their damnation being complete. This moral perspective is built into the novel through the use of the devil, this time in the guise of an unclean filthy hag, Joe Hull; his dirtiness is in contrast to the cleanliness that the Patches' cherish and wear as a badge. He is brought in by Maury Noble and Richard Caramel who are "devilish" with drink, and he seems to centralise the consciousness of evil in the meaningless drunken spree. Gloria's repulsion and anger at this unsightly intrusion is justified. His easy informality bordering on cheekiness intensifies her fears, and she retires to bed in disgust, and lying there:

> She became rigid. Someone had come to the door and was standing regarding her,

> very quiet except for a slight swaying motion. She could see the outline of his figure distinct against some indistinguishable light. There was no sound anywhere, only a great persuasive silence --- even the dripping had ceased .... only this figure, this swaying in the doorway, an indiscernible and subtly menacing terror, a personality filthy under its varnish, like smallpox spots under a layer of powder. Yet her tired heart beating until it shook her breast made her sure that there was still life in her, desperately shaken, threatened...[55]

It almost seems Gloria's vision of evil is incarnated in Joe Hull as Amory's was in Humbird:

> In another instant it seemed that some imaginable force would shatter her out of existence .... and then the figure in the doorway -- it was Hull, she saw, Hull--- turned deliberately and, still slightly swaying, moved back and off, as

55. The Beautiful and Damned, pp.242-43.

> if absorbed into that incomprehensible light that had given him dimension.[56]

Then menace which Joe Hull symbolises is the threatening terror of the falsity of outward pursuits in which creative energies are absorbed. This is because the characters in this golden world betray themselves by a self-deluding chimera of false glitter and" the heightened sensitivity to the promise of life", that they seek to attain. The horror is of unearthly illumination. But the visitation by this not so explicitly supernatural figure does have a moral impact on the thematic development of the story in that the devil steps into the vacuum of moral alternative that no other character represents.

The social point of view comes to the fore in the distinction between rich and poor. From "a third layer... contiguous layers down to the city's shoes":

> Jewesses were coming out into society of Jewish men and women from Riverside to Bronx, looking forward to a rising young broker or jeweller and a kosher wedding: Irish girls were casting their eyes, with licence .... upon a society of

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56. Ibid., p.243.

> young Tammy politicians, pious undertakers.... And naturally, the city caught the contagious air entree'--- the working girls, poor ugly souls, wrapping soap in the factory and showing finery in the big stores, dreamed that perhaps the spectacular excitement of this winter they might obtain for themselves the coveted male --- as in a muddled crowd an inefficient pickpocket may consider his chances increased.[57]

The city's "shoes" are the poor ugly souls whom Amory Blaine had wanted to serve but here the attitude is not only indifferent but contemptuous. Work and sweat make the "hot unprosperous poor" old and ugly, crucially different from the rich who are always young, amiable, graceful; they cannot be uplifted without wealth:

> A simple, healthy leisure class it was --- The best of the men not unpleasantly undergraduate... The women, of more than average beauty, fragile, athletic, somewhat idiotic as hostesses but charming and infinitely decorative as

57. Ibid., 31-32.

> guests. Sedately and gracefully they danced the steps of their selection in the balmy tea hours, accomplishing with a certain dignity the movements so horribly burlesqued by clerk and chorus girl the country over.[58]

The social snobbery was part of the vision to focus the quest for identity and placement with the rich which would make them different and so more acceptable. Irony is implied here as it indicates the shallowness of the dream. Thus snobbery and class distinction don't exhibit Fitzgerald's prejudice against the poor but they serve a thematic function as well which would become stronger as he matured as an artist. He comes closer to the material he would use in his later novels to signify the values he needed; he seems to have become morally aware of the fact that in post-war America the world of splendour and wealth is no substitute for human failure. Besides, tragic experience is not the privilege of weak characters like Anthony; that is why disillusionment and failure lack intensity and richness.

The "American show" is what the novel is about, and what Mencken had taught him about how to be an American. Fitzgerald was in Europe while the novel was in gestation and he incorporated such ideas and influences as he was

58. Ibid., pp.191-92.

prone to have been exposed to; in a sense that speaks of its richness and variety. He was working in a dense cultural milieu of both America and Europe: 1922 saw such other momentous works as Ulysses, The Wasteland and important works of D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, Marcel Proust, Yeats and others. Ofcourse, he chose to write of the society and period he knew best; he exposed and reflected his age which formed and represented the romantic possibilities of the 'Self' of his fictional heroes who are replicas of the modern American society and aspirations; they are both idealised and denigrated. Just as he could write of the emotions he well understood, so also could he use the material that was his own emotions and feelings filtered through the American social experience. The core of this social experience is the conditions created by surfeit of wealth, symbolised in the glamour of New York. It was the unfulfilled dreams and desires and seething decadence which was always so transparent to him. The novel is subtle and more difficult in its imaginative depth marking the culmination of experience over imagination. This reflects an intenser movement towards a complete awareness of his material, away from his youthful passions, self-complacency eagerness for success and fame; there is a veering away from juvenile endeavours and expectations of the dream towards a profounder and intenser exploration of that dream and its failure.

CHAPTER IV

THE BRAVE NEW WORLD

An old world is collapsing and a new world rising; we have better eyes for the collapse than for the rise, for the old one is the world we know.

(John Updike)

CHAPTER IV

The Brave New World

In The Great Gatsby the enchantment of the American dream and the vision of the ideal become an inexhaustible mystery; while its luminescence continues to allure, the dream must wither all too soon and the American promise degenerate into sinister economic possibilities resulting in spiritual squalor and an end to all idealism. It is symbolised in Gatsby's quest for the material possibilities of American life which can only be realised in the ferocious acquisition of money and what comes to be the absurd and grotesque accumulation of the appearance of wealth. Besides, the novel provides a new insight into the American past as material for the novel, past of the American experience that Fitzgerald with his consummate artistic skill and imagination transmuted into a viable literary art form. This stands out as a contrast to the earlier Jazz Age documentaries, This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned, along with many short stories based on the "flapper" and "philosopher" whose popular appeal lay in their deeply rooted contemporaneity.

Nostalgia, the imaginative recall of the American past, becomes the realised achieved experience in The Great Gatsby. The wistful yearning for the past turns into an intense moment of awareness "a form of consciousness" that

permeates the entire psychological ambience of the novel. More than any other American novelist, Fitzgerald epitomised the role of nostalgia that shaped and tempered American fiction of the Twenties, that "lucid moment of grace":

> In plumbing this [nostalgia] sentiment to its depths, rather than merely using or abusing it, Fitzgerald dropped to the deep, dead-end centre of the American mind. He let his line out deeper than Hemingway and Twain, deeper than Mississippi and the Big Two-Hearted River, down to that sunken island that once mythically flowered for Dutch sailors' eyes. That was where the dream began, he tells us, that still pandered to men in whispers: that was where man held his breath in the presence of this brave new world. It was Fitzgerald dreaming of paradise, who was compelled to an aesthetic contemplation that made of Nostalgia that snare and delusion; a work of art.[1]

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1. Wright Morris, The Territory Ahead (New York, 1963), p.158.

In the dream of Gatsby the act of evocation of nostalgia, the hauntedness of the American past, embraces the "mythic vastness" of the American continent. The evocation of the mood of reminiscence melts into the disastrous though charming "echoes of the Jazz Age". The novel is not only an indictment of the contemporary American society of the vulgar and insensitive rich, but it is also an arraignment of American aspirations and American history. However, Gatsby is something more "than a mere exorcising of whatever false elements of the American dream Fitzgerald felt within himself; he becomes a symbol of America itself dedicated to 'the service of a vast, vulgar and meretricious beauty'".[2] Gatsby pays the price for his romantic illusions; he is made to realise the futility of the dream he pursues and which proves unworthy of him; "his passage of golden illusions to the bitterness of loss to ultimate exile and return" and to the final failure of the dream itself are part of this disenchantment. In Gatsby's negating the relativistic concepts of time, Fitzgerald reflects the literary modernist's preoccupation with it. In this sense, Gatsby is the exemplar of the negation of the concept of measurable, statistical unit of time. This is a motif which links Fitzgerald with the modernists:

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2. William Troy, "The Authority of Failure", F. Scott Fitzgerald: The man and His Work (New York, 1966), ed. Alfred Kazin, p.190.

> In Cherry Orchard, Vanya remarks that the thermometer is broken; it is the
> precursor of many other moments -- the thermometers of The Magic Mountain, the compass Ike McCaslin lays aside in The Bear, the tilted clock on the mantle piece in The Great Gatsby -- where conventional instruments of measurement become useless".[3]

The concept of time evoked in T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets is a significant propositional motif which illumines Gatsby's own transcendent ideas of time:

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.
> If all time is eternally present
> All time is unredeemable
>
> .....

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3. Modernism 1890-1930 ed. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (Harmondsworth, 1967), p.159.

> What might have been and what has been
> Point to one end, which is always present.[4]

> The quest for perfection which Gatsby represents thus has a triadic structure: 'the paradisal condition is to be attained by a threefold legerdemain compromising the transformation of space, the suspension of time and the negation of Experience with its distinction of good and evil".[5]

It was in Europe that Fitzgerald began to work earnestly on his new novel thereby adding a new perspective to it. Europe led to his exploration and rediscovery of American consciousness in terms of self and social experience. This was incorporated in Gatsby's colossal illusions as "The perpetual possibilities of perfection of the American imagination; in Gatsby's vision of the ideal self Fitzgerald proposed to stretch the American dream to its utmost possibilities. The novel would be more than a mere autobiographical projection and he would bring his mental

4. T.S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton", Four Quartets (London, 1972), p.13.

5. D.S. Savage, "The Significance of F. Scott Fitzgerald", F.Scott Fitzgerald: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Arthur Mizener, p.151.

and spiritual growth and maturity to bear on it making it perfect in design and structure. He was tired of "trashy imaginings" and being the author of This Side of Paradise, and wanted to start all over again. He was conscious of the artistic grandeur that The Great Gatsby had attained and his earlier novels lacked.

> My new novel appears in late March [it was published on April 10, 1925], The Great Gatsby. It represents about a years work and I think its about ten years better than anything I've done. All my harsh smartness has been kept ruthlessly out of it -- its the greatest weakness in my work, distracting and disfiguring it even when it calls up an isolated sardonic laugh. I don't think this has a touch left.[6]

The romantic vision that Fitzgerald thought he would recapture in the imaginative re-possession of the past seems to be the essential truth that Gatsby quests after but it all ends up in self-delusion and betrayal of the American dream. He was full of self confidence when he wrote to Maxwell Perkins from France:

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6. Letters, p.498.

> I think my novel is about the best American novel ever written..... Its been a fair summer. I've been unhappy but my work hasn't suffered from it. I am grown at last.[7]

When the book was completed, and a perfect artistic achievement, he put all his faith in his powers as an artist and novelist:

> The cheerfullest thing in my life are first Zelda and second the hope that my book has something extraordinary about it. I want to be extravagantly admired again.[8]

He blended the aural and visual, and the impact of the techniques of cinema is unmistakable: the close-up, the flashbacks of narratives are obvious illustrations, and the motif of film itself as a celluloid extension of an individual's adolescent illusions.

In The <u>The Great Gatsby</u> the sequence of actions and events filter through the consciousness of Nick Carraway, the narrator commentator of the book. The ironic greatness of

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7. Ibid., p.185.

8. Ibid, p.377.

Jay Gatsby itself owes to the intuitional apprehension and vision of Nick. The burden of Gatsby's illusions is borne back ceaselessly through the mind and understanding of Nick, who seems to hold and encompass the novel's lived experience and resultant sense of values that structures and magnifies our comprehension of the deeper meaning of the American dream and its potent mythic powers and fascination for the American mind. Carraway's status as an observer-narrator gives him the necessary detachment and distance to view events objectively. But he is a participant too. What he tells has a ring of truth because of his deeper awareness of having shared and experienced what he relates. The point of view, "I was there" adds credence to the reporting. Such a perspective created out of a doubleness that Nick himself reflects, "I was within and without simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life" are in consonance with his own desire and feelings. Maxwell Perkins understood Fitzgerald's reasons for using the new technique:

> It is an extraordinary book, suggestive of all sorts of thoughts and moods. You adopted exactly the right method, of telling it, that of employing a narrator who is more of a spectator than an actor: this puts the reader upon a point of observation on a higher level than that on which the characters stand and

> at a distance that gives perspective. In no other way could your irony have been so effective nor the reader have been enabled so strongly to feel at times the strangeness of human circumstance in a vast heedless universe.[9]

Fitzgerald had confessed to Mencken how much he owed to Conrad regarding this technique:

> You mention in your review .... that conrad has only two imitators....., How about ....me in Gatsby (God! I've learned allot from him) ..... But his (Conrad's) approach and his prose is naturally more imitated than his material.[10]

Carraway emerges as a sympathetic and humane narrator concerned with the fate of Jay Gatsby, aiming to retrieve whatever meaning and value Gatsby's apparently futile and self-deluding pursuits of the past have to offer. In the end Carraway's unfailing faith in Gatsby's illusions is

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9. John Hall Wheelcock, ed. Editor to Author: The Letters of Maxwell E. Perkins (New York, 1950), p.32.

10. Letters, p.501.

justified, and this is what sustains the novels ultimate burden as well as its glory.

It is Nick's point of view which determines the novel's movements, directs its moral vision and lends imaginative meaning to what the book is about. Without his repudiation of the Buchanan world of irresponsibility and carelessness, and upholding the value of Gatsby's passionate force and innocence of his dreams and illusions, his "romantic readiness" the moral centre of the novel would collapse, and fall to pieces. At the end of the book when Gatsby is dead, Nick Carraway knows that he (Gatsby) alone has been all right, that what eventually destroyed him was "what preyed on [him], what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams". Gatsby gains in depth and relevance because of the understanding extended to him by Nick for left to himself he has nothing to say; his consciousness of his own "Platonic conception of himself" becomes articulate in his narrator. Carraway's attitude as a spectator, his aesthetic detachment and his perceptive mind make him the most authentic narrator in probing Gatsby's mythic proneness, the disenchantment of his dream; his dream and his world dissolved in their own excesses; but the spectre-like insubstantiality of his romantic illusions and dream is the heady wine that turns into commercialism and corruption that finally destroys the "incorruptible dreams". Van Wyck Brooks maintains that the

Puritan tradition's undue emphasis on material values and consequent neglect of the aesthetic side of life had crushed American culture. The impalpable idealism of Gatsby makes him soar above reality and the inhuman "gross materiality" of Tom Buchanan which stands as a blatant contrast to that idealism:

> his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night.[11]

Nick understands this, and alone apprehends that Gatsby is "worth the whole damned bunch put together". They both complement each other inspite of their opposed desires and tensions, and lend meaning to the tale. Nick is what rational experience, history and reason is, against Gatsby's innocent imagination, state of idealism, dream and timelessness; such is their allegorical representation:

> Nick is like Wordsworth listening "to the still, sad music of humanity", while

11. The Great Gatsby, p.145.

> Gatsby is like Blake seeing hosts of angels in the sun. The one can only look at the facts and see them as tragic; the other tries to transform the facts by an act of the imagination. Nick's mind is conservative and historical, as is his lineage; Gatsby's is radical and apocalyptic --- as rootless as his heritage. Nick is too much immersed in time and in reality; Gatsby is hopelessly out of it. Nick is always withdrawing while Gatsby pursues the green light. Nick can't hurt, but neither can he be happy. Gatsby can experience ecstasy, but his fate is necessarily tragic. They are two of the best type of humanity: the moralist and the radical.[12]

The images that most eminently reflect the American ideographs of wealth and beauty of life and social identity are strung together in a series of parties -- gorgeous, vulgar, incoherent -- that determine the inter-relatedness of characters in terms of evaluation and meaning they

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12. John Henry Raleigh, "F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby", F. Scott Fitzgerald; Critical Essays, ed. Arthur Mizener, p.103.

represent. All the major events of the novel are organised and revolve round parties: They knit the chapters neatly together and set the mood and central conflict into motion.

In the opening chapter the dinner party at the Buchanans focuses their "freedom with money"; they "drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people.... were rich together". The life of the fabulously rich epitomised in Tom and Daisy Buchanan contrasts unfavourably with the glaring immediacy of the dismal effects of poverty on the garage keeper, Wilson in the Valley of Ashes. The party in the next chapter, of Tom Buchanan and Myrtle Wilson in their clandestine New York hide-out emphasises the impact of material grossness on the lives of the poor when wealth vulgarises the already coarsening poverty.

The following chapter further heightens the parties that already hint at the vast ostentation and pretentiousness of the rich in the earlier chapters. It serves to point to the culmination of Gatsby's party, the central action of the novel, the highest pitch of wealth displayed in its utmost gaudiness and splendour. It is Gatsby's thunderbolt appearance from out of nowhere to host fabulous parties to the rich "moths" of New York who come almost always uninvited and go away with the same nonchalance. Gatsby, in self-dramatisation is making supreme efforts to find social

moorings where paradoxically none can be found for it is a rootless society. The parties are a counterpoise to Gatsby's self-imposed isolation which is a legendary mark of his self-sufficiency. He has a larger and more dramatic purpose in having the elaborate decor of tinsel ostentation, however brittle and jarring its glory; it is one of making impressions of his greatness on Daisy Buchanan, this is his "pathetic substitute for heroism"; to win her over, to reunite his dreams of love to wipe out her five years of married life with Tom because she is the only absolute reality, the untarnished ideal to which all his dreams must subserve.

Chapter IV of the novel again enlists the characters most frequently present at Gatsby's parties. An oblique hint at his "business gennections" comes out at a private luncheon party in New York where Nick, Gatsby and Wolfsheim are present. There is something shady about Gatsby's wealth in contrast with the Buchanan's inherited wealth though the latter use theirs for vicious and vile purposes. All come to share the sumptuous delicacies at Gatsby's party and nibble at what wealth offers while he remains unconcerned, remote and aloof -- the absentee host; though the wealth has been acquired by dubious means there is in it a confused co-mingling of idealism, love, beauty and lust; it is like the American dream which impelled the seeker to scramble for

easy money like the early English merchants and Dutch adventurers.

The accent on wealth is symbolised in the "huge incoherent failure of a house" which Gatsby has bought to out-do everyone in the possession of wealth and to give to it the proximity of the dream, "so that Daisy would be just across the bay". This stunning revelation makes clear the fixation of Gatsby who is "delivered suddenly from the womb of his purposeless splendour"; womb is symbolic of life conceived in its minutest form; the social womb, however, from which an upstart like Gatsby catapults into sudden wealth and popularity is diseased at the very source and fails to turn out anything better than poison vitiating the whole moral ethos. America, like its wealth, is no longer innocent; it is corrupt.

Gatsby's intricate web of wealth is entangled in his love for Daisy. This relation springs up in the "party -- sequence plot" in swift consequence of what has preceded and what climaxes at Nick's tea party where the dream of dreams meets and Gatsby and Daisy are reunited. However, the subsequent chapter makes veiled insinuations to the impossibility of their final reunion; it becomes clear that the dream would be dissipated and there would be disillusionment, even death. The party at the Plaza

announces the end of Gatsby's dream and expectations. The end comes in the eventual death of Myrtle, preceded by the ironic floating strains of Mendlessohen's Wedding March. This irony and symbolism forces the conclusion that in the vicious web of money no one is immune to the pervasive and endemic corruption and spiritual ruin: even the apparently unrelated Myrtle Wilson has been killed by Daisy, the wife of her paramour, Tom: they remained unknown to each other until Myrtle's death brought home the significance of their relationship; each bears the taint of moral deterioration. Myrtle's death is symbolic of the destruction of American yearnings for higher things even in the face of hindering poverty and absence of social moorings and status. She prefigures Gatsby's aspirations in the sense of possessing wealth inspite of humble origins. Whereas she is defeated and dies, he has a unifying imagination and dream that gives him an edge and a promise of survival over her; he is able to transcend the circumstances that she succumbs to. Her death therefore polarises the fact of wealth against the dreams, illusions and innocent hopes. Such is the significance of human relationship that Fitzgerald portrays in the novel -- the moral depravity and spiritual decrepitude that lies underneath. It marks an end to all parties; no social conviviality, no large impersonal gatherings or search for social identities; only unfulfilled

promises, unrealised hopes, broken dreams and unassuaged alliances.

The closing scene to the episode is a party for two, Tom and Daisy in a non-party mood sitting over:

> a plate of cold chicken between them and two bottles of ale.... They weren't happy and neither of them had touched the chicken or the ale -- and yet they weren't unhappy either. There was an unmistakable air of natural intimacy about the picture, and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together.[13]

The "plate of cold chicken" points to the ironic contrast of Myrtle's death and how it brings together money alliances. It is suggestive of utter callousness and moral indifference of the rich who "retreat into their wealth" when threatened by external reality, scorning love, idealism and all such positive values that give life spiritual contentment. Daisy has finally turned her back on Gatsby's love and has returned to Tom and completely identified herself with him, the symbol of corruption and desiccation of American wealth. All this while Gatsby waits outside, alone "standing there in the moonlight -- watching over nothing". It is a moment

13. The Great Gatsby, p.116.

of absolute sterility and intellectual vacuity experiencing the death of his dreams, an end to the "colossal vitality of his illusions"; nothing is left that can rejuvenate his illusions with meaning and purpose. The breakfast party of Gatsby and Carraway marks the end of Gatsby's unfulfilled aspirations and dreams of love. He relates to Nick the remainder of the story and the former misses his appointment with Jordan Baker implying perhaps another severance of a life time relationship. Gatsby is murdered followed by the death of George Wilson "and the holocaust is complete".

The pernicious manoeuvrings that lead to the disastrous end of Myrtle, Gatsby and George Wilson show only how the poverty-stricken aspirants for wealth seem to be reduced to death and nothingness; death of an illusion is the death of the self; these people had nothing to retreat into and death seems the only logical possibility for them because through the acquisition of wealth they had tried to elude the larger issues of life. On the other hand, wealth appears to solidly protect its possessors, Tom and Daisy. This is also the ironic symbolism of the nameless hundreds that flocked to Gatsby's parties but not to his funeral. Wealth was welcome for it gave social status and identity but not its sinister links and associations. The final chapter too is a party. But it is a non-party funeral of Gatsby where the guests are not turning up even though they have been invited. It is

only Owl Eyes who realises the absence, "Why, my God! They used to go there by the hundred".[14] Gatsby is dead but the show goes on showing that the wheels of pollution set in motion by the forces of wealth continue moving unabated. Thus though the parties are over for Gatsby, and his dreams are buried with him, "the greatest, gaudiest spree in history" is on for America, and the story of the Golden West, the beginning of the American Dream continues in a different context.

The whole movement in The Great Gatsby gains a transcendent meaning in Nick Carraway's leaving the Mid West for the East, for Long Island village of West Egg, a migration inevitable in the prevailing conditions of post-war America. The Eastward "push" was in that logic of the situation:

> Instead of being the warm centre of the world, the Middle West now seemed like the ragged edge of the universe -- so I decided to go East and learn the bond business. Everybody I knew was in the bond business.[15]

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14. Ibid., p.140.

15. Ibid., p.3.

The golden West of glamour and excitement had moved to the East and with it "everybody". In the East, it was East Egg that lured the seeker with its widening horizons of the possibility of wealth; it was the "green light" of the rich while West Egg remained "the less fashionable of the two". The distinction between East and West Egg pertained to an unsightly contrast of wealth, inherited and established, and what the noveaux riche possessed. Such a contrasting and marked

> physical resemblance must have been a source of perpetual confusion to the gulls that fly overhead. To the wingless a more arresting phenomenon is their dissimilarity in every particular aspect, shape and size.[16]

West Egg with all the middle-class new wealth revealed the passionate intensity of Gatsby's dreams and urges; East Egg wealth had a compelling insistence of "bourgeois respectability" symbolised by Tom Buchanan.

The movement from one region to another does not materially change people from the old continuing actualities of which they have been parts; the social contours remain unerased.

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16. Ibid., p.4.

The blurring distinctions of East and West Egg are the moral vacuity and hollowness for lack of hopeful dreams and desires, a complete absence of adolescent expectations. This makes Nick aware of the continual drift in people's lives, unrestful and incoherent; the interior of the Buchanan's house which sways in its glittering ambience is the most coherent symbol of this "drift":

> A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags, twisting them up toward the frosted wedding cake of the ceiling, and then rippled over the wine coloured rug, making a shadow on it as wind does on the sea.
>
> The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon. They were both in white, and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house ..... then there was a boom as Tom Buchanan shut the rear windows and the caught wind died out about the room, and the

> curtains and the rugs and the two young women ballooned slowly to the floor.[17]

The "anchored balloon" imagery of drift here evokes a fragile feeling about the creatures in the room living their precarious lives without any purposeful direction, languid, silent lives, desireless, unprotesting, with a languor and sadness about them that is the East which allures only to disillusion.

The nostalgia of expectations, the past full of thrilling possibilities, not as a social reality but as a figment of the mind, are what tantalize the imagination; inspite of its betrayal the dream is always present. For Nick, however, the dream ends with Gatsby's death, and the spiritually enervated East becomes haunted so that he must return West, to the Mid West of "the thrilling returning trains of my youth" as he recalls. While there is no escape from this stuffy stultifying atmosphere, there is a frantic quest in vain for a place of rest and repose. He sees "that this has been the story of the West, afterall -- Tom and Gatsby, Daisy and Jordan and I were all Westerners, and perhaps we possessed some deficiency common which made us subtly

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17. Ibid, p.7.

unadaptable to Eastern life".[18] He knows that Gatsby has been cheated and destroyed by the East. The present fact of the East ruined and desiccated the past dream of the West. Gatsby could not go "home". Nick follows the ethical imperative, "go home, go West." Gatsby had found his social status, his class identity in the East; whereas the West had only vitalised his dream, "Jimmy always liked it better down East. He rose to his position in the East".[19] But Nick has his identity with the West where he must be "rid of his provincial squeamishness forever". Both cling to that West as the only reality they know and understand. The East they have known is the unstable, fluid ambivalent world of American wealth where past must be completely obliterated before new identities can be found, where Gatsby or Western sojourners are "Mr Nobody from Nowhere". But the East is also the image of new excitement engendered by money. that Nick must be initiated into through the books he bought" in red and gold like new money from the mint promising to unfold the shining secrets that only Midas, Morgan and Maecenas knew".[20]

Gatsby's own house is that central symbol of the new thrill and exhilaration of money: "a marble swimming pool and more

18. Ibid., p.141.

19. Ibid., p.134.

20. Ibid., pp.3-4.

than forty acres of lawn and garden". Bought from 'a brewer's deceased descendant', it is a distortion of American wealth and it fails to sustain the owner's identity, his status and his sense of belonging. It was a symbol of the external structure of his life and falls into obscurity when he dies. This obscurity in itself is an act of indifference, symbolic of the obscure indifference shown to him by the very people who had accepted his hospitality on numerous occasions. However, he drifted away from change to fixity, to something rooted in time and place but which tends to put the clock of history back, to retrieve a past wherein lies his future. He succeeds only in debasing the dream since it yields to the debilitating possibilities of wealth. His clinching of the idealised, pastoral past is only a possibility of the American imagination which is annihilated by the realism of industrialisation. It is

> Nick Carraway's Wordsworthian rejection of the wicked, citified East, and his return to the 'good' Mid West by implication a turning from contemporary moral shoddiness to an earlier pastoral point in history when men were close to Nature and therefore virtuous.[21]

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21. John McCormick, The Middle Distance (New York, 1971), p.39.

The American peasant is not the real material for fiction, as Fitzgerald knew:

> Either Lewis, Lardner, and myself have been badly fooled, or else using him as typical American material is simply a stubborn seeking for the static in a world that for almost a hundred years had simply not been static. Isn't it a fourth rate imagination that can find only the old property farmer in all this amazing time and land.[22]

But such a longing Gatsby does fulfil. He dedicates himself to the faith and hope of the Edenic dream and its possibilities through wealth and its meretricious pursuits, everything for which Nick had expressed "unaffected scorn" and abomination. However, he remains dissociated and stands aloof from the very quest for status and identity which he epitomises in his dream and the facade that he erects of anonymity.

The world of East and West Egg is that nameless, anonymous world into which flow rich New York "moths" and butterflies who drift into Gatsby's lavish parties unannounced, non-

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22. Letters, p.206.

caring, non-knowing and having no identifiable names. But this is because his fantastic image must conform to his impersonal, unreal stature. He welcomes such people who affect his dream and are at the same time unaware of the inner compulsion that prompts him to host such fabulous parties:

> There was music from my neighbour's house through summer nights. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars. At high tide in the afternoon I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft, or taking the sun on the hot sand of his beach while two motor boats slit the waters of the sound, drawing aquaplane over cataracts of foam. On the weekends his Rolls Royee became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains.[23]

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23. The Great Gatsby, p.31.

The exertion and competence with which the affairs are organised show his passionate energy to keep "the foul dust" from floating into his dreams and blurring them, and to focus the dream as a promise of life; he did succeed to some extent. While the formidable paraphernalia catered to every whim of his guests they left behind a wreck; a terrible mess;

> On Monday eight servants, including an extra gardener, toiled all day with mops and scrubbing brushes and hammers and garden shears, repairing the ravages of the night before.[24]

Such is the ironic-symbolism of the nuance of people outside Gatsby's world treating with contempt and indifference the dream he has nurtured with care and labour. Symbolically also its implications are a meaningless drift of life on a sea of moral vacuity:

> The sea of Faith
> Was once, too, at the full, and round
> earth's shore
> Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd
> But now I only hear
> Its melancholy, long withdrawing roar,

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24. Ibid., p.31.

> Retreating, to the breath
> Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
> And naked shingles of the world.[25]

The weekend parties are Gatsby's gigantic gesture of earthly paradise with all the over-fragile imagery of the "moths", "blue gardens", champagne, and the fairy-land atmosphere; what the quests make of it reflects the breach and brokenness of American society. It is Fitzgerald's own clustering and intensifying details of meaningless contacts between people who have come to symbolise the inertia of human relations:

> chatter and laughter, and casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot, and enthusiastic meetings between women who never know each other's names..... Laughter is easier minute by minute, spilled with prodigality, tipped out at a cheerful word. The groups change more swiftly, swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the some breath; already there are wanderers, confident girls who weave

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25. Mathew Arnold, Dover Beach, 1121-28.

> here and there among the stouter and more stable, become for a sharp, joyous moment the centre of a group and then, excited with triumph, glide on through the sea-change of faces and voices and color and the constantly changing light ..... There is a burst of chatter as the erroneous news goes around that (one of the wandering girls) is Gilda Gray's understudy from the Follies.[26]

In such a state nobody gives a damn as to who the other is. They are all knitted in fragile contacts. In Gatsby's world, he is the central figure, the pivot on which everything hinges. This is a consciously contrived, well maneuvered and surreptitious move, the crowning irony being that even he is not known to everybody:

> People were not invited -- they went there... some how they ended up at Gatsby's door. Once there they were introduced by somebody who knew Gatsby, and after that they conducted themselves according to the rules of behaviour associated with an amusement park.[27]

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26. The Great Gatsby, p.32.

All kinds of rumours are afloat which everyone tends to believe and no one cares or tries to investigate. Gatsby himself with his carefully studied graces pretends to know everyone: in the midst of clattering noises he whispers to Nick, "Your face is familiar. Weren't you in the Third Division during the War?" Only one of the other guests besides Nick, Owl Eye's tries to penetrate beyond the pretentious facade and magnitude of what Gatsby has created about himself, the colossal betrayal of the American dream; besides, out of the hundreds he's the only one to turn up for Gatsby's funeral. When the party is in full-swing there is "the first supper- there would be another one after midnight". A bell rings that the "first supper" would be followed by "the last supper" at which the host, here Gatsby, would be betrayed and crucified. That is what actually happens and there is a party after the funeral only that hardly any of the "disciples" turn up.

Owl Eyes becomes significant and seems to have a symbolic role, and reminds one of the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg. In the Gatsby world of purposive blindness to keep away the dust of reality from floating in to dispel the dream, to keep illusions intact, where everyone is non-self and no one seems to know his true-self, the "eyes" faculty to see and

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27. Ibid., p.32.

envision reality, is also what can give meaning to life and reality against dreams and illusions. The "eyes" could be a symbol of God or Gatsby's dream, and perhaps even more in their having everything within its purview, and survey the entire span of the "foul dust" and ash-heaps in the valley, in the abandoned nightmare of "the haunting symbol of the dens absconditus who might once have set the wasteland in motion".[28] It could thus serve both as a focus and an undeviating base, a single point of reference in the midst of monstrous disorders where the American dream and promise had long lost their vision. Yet the brooding quality of the vision lingers. Eckleburg's eyes become the symbolic manifestation of the flickers once alive in the American dream but now only brooding eternally over the dead and deadening ash heaps of the Valley of Ashes, what Gatsby's own summer parties have turned into -- the youthful innocent expectations lost in the irrecapturable past, dead in the sun and rain. The reality obscured by "foul dust" is thus what Owl Eyes tries to see through the descending darkness. He is among the nameless ones of Gatsby's world. Nick witnesses a, "bizarre and tumultuous scene"; finds a coupe resting in a ditch shorn of one wheel and later on the occupant coming out and trying to drive it back. Owl Eyes was pleading that he was not guilty of overturning: "You

28. A.E. Dyson, "The Great Gatsby: Thirty Six Years After", F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Arthur Mizener, p.113.

don't understand, I wasn't driving. Theres another man in the car", explained the criminal. The man who emerges from the car makes the incident look even more bizarre when he says that theres "No harm in trying [to drive] -- Back out -- -- [even when] the wheel and car are no longer joined by any physical bond". Thus Owl Eyes being accused of a crime he hasn't committed foreshadows Gatsby's own plight when he had to die for a crime he hasn't committed. Like Dr. T.J. Eckleburg, Owl Eyes not only watches but seems to sympathise with Gatsby and puts the seal of approval on him, "A poor son-of-a bitch" because he too wasn't driving the "death car".

But there are those whose names are catalogued and bear certain relationships to Gatsby. The names suggest a certain quality of life and association in Gatsby's world. Even they are blind and unaware of his real identity and the "time-table in which the names are recorded symbolises the time defunct and sunk in the morass of obsolescence "an insubstantial world .... torn loose from its moorings.... grotesque and unreal as a nightmare". It is a past dead and obliterated:

> Once I wrote down on the empty spaces of a time-table the names of those who came to Gatsby's house that summer. It is an

> old time-table now 'disintegrating in its folds, and headed. This schedule in effect July 5th, 1922'. But I can still read the gray names, and they will give you a better impression than my generalities of those who accepted Gatsby's hospitality and paid him the subtle tribute of knowing nothing about him.[29]

The people named have names resembling flora and fauna (Orchid, Gloria, Lilly, Leeches, Beaver, Fishguards, Snell, Hammerheads to mention a few), a direct relationship of their blindness to their own selves as also to Gatsby. They are disembodied creatures, illusions, transient beings, and since they stand in symbolic relationship to the brittle and shattered American dream, their names appropriately enough come to be mentioned the day after the American national festival.

Gatsby's dream is his strategy for survival, his buffer against annihilating actualities of American experience. But what eventually survives is the discolouration of that dream into a nightmare. He dies before the nightmare has had its full impact on the events of his life and before he can

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29. The Great Gatsby, p.48.

confront his actual annihilation because the dream doesn't survive. Myrtle Wilson possesses the kind of passionate energy that Tom, the macho polo player, finds sensual gratification in, which Daisy fails to provide, and which Jordan Baker doesn't promise. He signifies the kind of brutalising force of American wealth that exactly matches the coarsening vulgarising pursuits of Myrtle to copy the moneyed status of the newly rich, seeking their identity in the American upper-class. He can purchase Daisy as he can purchase his mansion and thereby bring destruction of the dream, the very dream that sustained Gatsby for Daisy is bought by the highest bidder; the love of Gatsby, for all its gorgeous idealism couldn't equal the power and lure of money; however, this dream, the ideal American wealth becomes dehumanised.

Gatsby dies a violent meaningless death, no less than Myrtle whose death prefigures the vision of final catastrophe about to overtake the dreamer, Gatsby, whose dreams spun the entire intricate web of the entangled destinies of those who figure in the novel. Myrtle symbolises the eagerness for over-reaching expectations which are promised and then debased and dehumanised by the American experience. The eager hopefuls include all those who went to Gatsby's parties especially the nameless hundred:

> all well-dressed and looking a little hungry, and all talking in low, earnest voices to solid and prosperous Americans ..... They were atleast agonisingly aware of the easy money in the vicinity and convinced that it was theirs for a few words in the right key.[30]

They are enticed by the dream to West Egg where they emerge from New York uninvited and lacking identities. There is a muted but unmistakable atmosphere of violence which pervades the novel; several of the guests who attend Gatsby's parties get involved in violent incidents: Civit was 'drowned; Mouldon had 'strangled his wife', Henry L. Palmelta 'killed himself by jumping infront of a sub-way train in Times Square,' and Young Brewer 'had his nose shot-off in the war'. The car itself as an instrument of destruction plays an important role. Tom, for instance, is involved in a car accident, with the hotel chamber maid, and another guest Ripley Snell is 'so drunk that an automobile went over his right hand'.

The poverty-stricken, striving poor are also allured here from the Valley of Ashes, and are hurt and destroyed because the illusions are so colossal that they cannot remain

30. Ibid., p.33.

untarnished, be they the romantic innocence of Gatsby or the high aspirations of Myrtle. But the rich, Tom and Daisy, with their established wealth can retreat unhurt to enjoy their leisured, irresponsible, careless gaiety. It is Gatsby who is disillusioned, broken in his affair with Daisy, and totally shattered; whereas she has few regrets and fewer tears for him. Similarly Tom has little time for Myrtle once she is dead and lost. He is even indirectly responsible for Gatsby's death in the way he set George Wilson on Gatsby's trail, leading to the latter's fatal shooting of Gatsby and then to his own suicide. But Tom after having worked things out and used people for his own designs can go back to his moneyed barbarism since moral approbation is scorned by him.

Myrtle's indigent circumstances allow her only a small flat above Wilson's garage but Tom's money can procure her an apartment in New York:

> On the top floor -- a small living-room
> a small dining room, a small bedroom,
> and a bath. The living room was crowded
> to the doors with a set of tapestried
> furniture entirely too large for it, so
> that to move about was to stumble
> continually over scenes of ladies
> swinging in the gardens of

> Versailles.... Several old copies of Town Tattle lay on the table together with a copy of Simon Called Peter.[31]

It is symbolic of the appearances of wealth that Myrtle hankers after, and Tom alone can help maintain that illusion for her. All her appurtences of the rich, her dress, her conversation, the furnishings of her apartment and the car, become representative motifs of the contrasting aspirations from what her social status with George Wilson is, and what she desires and hopes she can attain with Tom. All her pretences while she is in her New York apartment, are sympathetic to vital passions trying to transcend the reality of her life. She succeeds in projecting an image of herself which is one of meaningless vulgar pursuit. Her straining after the sophisticated upper class advantages has a touch of futility and disaster. She becomes a ludicrous representative of 'genteel' society: with apparent delicacy she asks if the dog is a boy or a girl; this is in response to the seller referring to her (Myrtle) as `Lady'; Tom cuts the conversation short with a harsh remark, "Its a bitch". This is a superb' cameo, pin-pointing a reversal of social classes. Yet, to Myrtle, it is, as the well-lit windows of her apartment are to the casual watcher outside, the

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31. Ibid., p.23.

semblance of excitement and glittering mystery. This is what Nick could perceive:

> High over the city our line of yellow windows must have contributed their share of human secrecy to the casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I was him too, looking up and wondering. I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life.[32]

Presumably , such snobbishness is the hope of salvaging the glory and regaining what is lost in the past, though it be totally irrelevant to the present reality. Like Gatsby, Myrtle too is destroyed by the illusory pretence of that expectation.

But death comes to Gatsby when the vision is dead and no more illusions are left to energise his dream. The history of America and its larger possibilities are over for him, no more telephone calls from Daisy:

> I have an idea [says Nick] that Gatsby himself didn't believe [the phone call]

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32. Ibid., p.28.

> from Daisy] would come, perhaps he no longer cared. If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream. He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about .... like that ashen, fantastic figure [George B. Wilson] gliding toward him through the amorphous trees.[33]

Gatsby had paid a high price for that gorgeously romantic dream. He ultimately transcended the very history of America that first lifted him to the heights of imaginative grandeur and then destroyed him. He was devoured by the cannibalistic predation of wealth that Dan Cody represents in the West; now that had been shifted to the East to New York where Meyer Wolfsheim had come to represent it symbolising the debasement of the dream and the ideal of older America.

33. Ibid., p.129.

Wolfsheim is the very man who has converted all national faith and aspirations to one single measure and mode of value -- money:

> He's the man who fixed the World's Series back in 1919..... The idea staggered me... If I had thought of it at all I would have thought of it as a thing that merely happened, the end of some inevitable chain. It never occurred to me that one man could start to play with the faith of fifty million people -- with the single mindedness of a burglar blowing a safe.[34]

Like the insouciance of the rich, Wolfsheim too evades his social responsibility, for in such a world moral accountability has been dispensed with for a mere expedience of dominating over-powering reality of money that now annihilates the genteel past and its memory. He would not come for Gatsby's funeral because we should "learn to show our friendship for a man when he is alive and not when he is dead ..... After that my own rule is to leave everything

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34. Ibid., p.58.

alone".[35] But the rationalization has deeper implications. His "gennections" with Gatsby are of a nature that shouldn't be betrayed by gestures of overt sentimentality especially when Gatsby's money is stained by illegal bootlegging and he has been murdered. It is a cautious move because it is Wolfsheim who has "made him" and his rotten wealth. Wolfsheim is also linked to all the names of East Egg and West Egg who have acquired respectability though the source of their money has the same rapacious history.

Wolfsheim has connections with places and identities that Tom and Daisy can claim. When he goes to Chicago avoiding not be involved with Gatsby's affairs by attending his funeral, it is the very Chicago from where Tom comes and to which Daisy looks for tokens of her social popularity. Tom Buchanan too is seen in Chicago for the last time when engaged in his irresponsible, futile activity of buying some "pearl necklace or perhaps only a pair of cuff buttons", the careless squandering of fortune he did not sweat to accumulate; his wife already has a pearl necklace; may be this one is for a mistress he's found soon after Myrtle's death. Wolfsheim, as all the other possessors of predatory wealth, has passed into vulgar obscenity once the history of the American dream has been actualised in amassing of fortune which is the manifest symbol of how the American

35. Ibid., p137.

rich display their money, a lack of virtues of general culture:

> Those ideologies of work, responsibility, politeness, respect, decency [that] had been perverted and bastardised in actualities which were the grabbing of wealth and the cloaking of the sweat and the 'marks' with gentility and the pretentious manner of a long established identity.[36]

Wolfsheim knows there's nothing much to attend in Gatsby's funeral except the history of Gatsby, his exploitative fortune as colossal, incoherent and fantastic as his dream. What vanishes with that dream, of course, is the vision of that America which once held out hopes for the redemption of mankind, the vision of Columbus, the Dutch sailors, Gatsby himself and the meaning and relevance of his story.

The dehumanised aspect of the wealthy of the East and West Egg is their absolute indifference and lack of fellow-feeling and sympathy for those down the social ladder. The lavish parties are lacking in this essential human contact for it is money which is the criterion of value and has

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36. Milton Sterne, The Golden Moment, p.253.

precedence over everything else, including people. Money is the sole end of life; it lures and deceives, sickens both the possessed and dispossessed. In a society where values are determined by nothing but money, it becomes the only guarantee of survival. On the contrary, lack of money abrogates whatever chances and assurances there are, confirming extermination. It gives social identity and the cardinal tenet in the race for life which is survival of the ruthless. This is the reason why everyone wishes to come East, to make material success and life possible. Poverty makes living a precarious business, the kind the Wilsons know in their "wasteland" apartment. Their garage and the dwelling is appropriately set "on the edge of the wasteland... contiguous to absolutely nothing." It symbolically implies a life reduced to nothingness divested of all meaningful direction and purpose. Gatsby too has such an identity, "Mr Nobody from Nowhere". It is very West Egg "raw vigour" that Nick knows "that chaffed under the old euphemism and... the too obtrusive fate that herded its inhabitants along a short-cut from nothing to nothing". It is reminiscent of Hemingway's concept of Nada, "a something called nothing which is so huge, terrible, overbearing, inevitable, omnipresent that once experienced it can never be forgotten".[37] This nothingness, is in essence,

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37. Carlos Baker, Hemingway Writer as Artist (Princeton, New Jersey, 1973), p.124.

Fitzgerald's creative vision of his American society. The abysmal depths to which poverty or moneylessness in the American moneyed society, can let an individual sink is symbolised in George B. Wilson and his motor garage. He has cars which he doesn't own but repairs and makes roadworthy so that they can resume their American journeys i.e. the quest for wealth social status and identity. His poverty is in the way of his return to the West, the symbol of peace and rest after having achieved material success in the East. he must depend on Tom Buchanan for getting cars, to be metaphorically transported beyond poverty beyond the chances that might otherwise be erased in attaining the possibility of the self:

> "But I need money pretty bad, and I was wondering what you are going to do with your old car", says Wilson to Tom Buchanan.
>
> "What do you want money for, all of a sudden?"
>
> "I've been here too long. I want to get away. My wife and I want to go West".[38]

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38. The Great Gatsby, p.98.

Though the Wilsons are hinged on Tom's money, George Wilson can somehow comprehend the meaning of Myrtle's betrayal in having a "life apart from him in another world". He is apparently ruined by remorse for that in which he has no part, in what she has secretly connived' against him. He "was so sick that he looked guilty." On the contrary, Tom Buchanan, whose wealth has mainly been responsible for his adulterous life with Myrtle as her extreme poverty compels her to solicit sex for something material and mundane, has no qualms of conscience or moral compunctions. He cuckolds George and is responsible for his ruin; he is also responsible for Myrtle's death and in an indirect way is the potential destroyer of Gatsby. Daisy too betrays Gatsby after leading him too far in his romantic expectations. He and his wife are at the apex of American aspirations and on the vantage point from where their actions are not open to the scrutiny and judgement of their inferiors. Even Gatsby for all his wealth, cannot equal their privileges and social preferments. He remains sad and wistfully pines for something beyond the reach of wealth. He remains a non-belonger and his social placelessness and resultant discontent is a perpetual blot. He thus symbolises debauching and debasing of the American ideal that the pioneers had dreamed of and realised through the material reality of accumulated riches.

The source of the inherited Buchanan wealth too has predacious origins. It takes from Demaine the oil magnate a direct legacy of American land resources. The comfortable fortune of the Carraways has the same source of American exploitative wealth. It was reshaping of the American myth of success in the post Civil War era that provided a new impetus for amassing wealth. This gave a new meaning to the significance and grandeur of the pioneer heritage that had larger cultural implications. The American identity was completely submerged within that milieu. Afterall, the tall claims of inherited wealth being free from the stigma of adventurism was in itself a myth that the Civil War had exploded. The purse-pride of the Buchanans and their corresponding scorn of Gatsby's wealth and his new social identity in concert with his status conferred by his newly acquired fortune, has the same predatory beginnings. Only the lag of time' the American past, seemed to lend the gloss of respectability. Guilty is no more guilty and deserving the scorn than the Buchanans or Carraways. But whereas Tom Buchanan has been brutalised by his wealth, Nick Carraway has been humanised by it. For Gatsby it has been a lesson in self-understanding; no sooner does the dream become dissipated than he relinquishes all efforts to manoeuvre the show of wealth he had so assiduously organised.

The process of social disruption set in motion by great American fortunes is no different in Gatsby than it is in the rapacious past of a Demanine, a Buchanan, a Dan Cody. Only Gatsby pursues the American past and the dream more resolutely and with greater tenacity of will than what became typical of the era of fortune hunting. He keeps the American past to his single private dream, symbolised in the "green light" that keeps it pure and incorruptible within the wolfish urge of average aspirations. Others like Tom and Daisy have simply debauched the dream and sold it to money and the glamorous display of wealth. This is what compels Nick to comment that Gatsby was worth more than "the whole damned bunch put together". But for his dream, Gatsby would be as damned as the others. His aspirations symbolise the incorruptible golden West and the golden moment of that past which has unloosened itself from the tight grip of material reality and become untarnished and idealised in the imagination. All this is suggested in the history of Dan Cody who stands for the wistful longing that the dream of the West has come to symbolise. Gatsby as a transcendent figure grows in our estimation and goes beyond what could be defined and constricted within social possibilities. He remains aloof and bright in his image, retaining the immense vitality of his illusions. Everything else seems hollow, vicious and unworthy of him more so his love for Daisy. For

that matter, his wealth and affair with Daisy hardly have the force to arouse deep interest.

The huge mansions and dwelling houses in the East and West Egg, like other objects and items of vast luxury and material opulence, big limousines, Rolls Royces, aquaplanes, motor-boats, private launches, private beaches, diving towers, enormous gardens and lawns, symbolise betrayal of the dream through social pretensions. The desired world of wasteful luxury and appearances is yearned for by all, from Gatsby leading the avaricious pack down to the West Egg tycoons and upstart mercantiles of New York, further down to the garage keepers and all in the Valley of Ashes. But wealth and its possessions are primarily symbols of brutish inhuman energy and crushing arrogance. Tom Buchanan represents that arrogance and snobbery in riding clothes:

> standing with his legs apart on the front porch.... a sturdy straw-haired man... with a hard mouth and a supercilious manner... two shining arrogant eyes had established dominance over his face and gave the appearance of always leaning aggressively forward. It

was a body capable of enormous leverage
-- a cruel body.[39]

A sportsman and macho hero of his times, Tom has taken a house in East Egg which is a parallel projection of the display of dazzling wealth to his taking Daisy whom every covetous eye gloats on; the same imagery of pink and white fragile comely beauty is used for both. They both become tangible manifestations of the enticement of the American dream. Tom is a symbolic representation of that American class of plutocratic wealth where their only distinction is their riches; they are unrestrained by the mores and moral codes of the middle class. He thus satisfies his ego only by having his East Egg house and Daisy commensurate with his enormous wealth but also covets the wives of others, Myrtle Wilson being one. In portraying Tom Buchanan, Fitzgerald brings not only his insight into the arrogance and crudity of the very rich but also their frightening intellectual impoverishment. The 'civilization is going to pieces' refrain Tom mouths constantly makes him one among many of the contemporary 'hollow men', 'headpiece filled with straw'. What makes Tom pathetic is not only that he 'nibbles at the edge of state ideas' but also undermines by his behaviour whatever grain of sense underlies these ideas. It

39. Ibid., p.6.

is part of the ambiguity of character that while intellectually he hates the class mix-up and the rise of 'coloreds', he does not have any hesitation in having affairs with hotel maids and others outside the pale of class. This is what had invited the wrath of young Fitzgerald; his distrust and hatred of the powerfully rich with the smouldering anger of the peasant. Tom Buchanan is the appropriate symbol of East Egg, of old inherited established wealth and social position. His rich, glittering world is his social strength, the inhuman strength of "hard malice" against which Gatsby would be "broken up like glass" and Tom and Daisy would return to the security and stability of money and "to the self-enclosed enjoyment of their careless, glittering lives". As a contrast, Gatsby's newly acquired wealth is emblematic of the West Egg magical appearances, out-doing Buchanan's plutocratic acquisitions.

The house which Nick Carraway dwells in is between the two Eggs. It is an "eyesore" compared to the residences of Gatsby and the Buchanans; it is "squeezed between huge places". What redeems it is "the white palaces of the fashionable East Egg [g]littering] along the water". It is a faceless house and has the unpretentiousness of the Mid West identity. Symbolically his house gives Nick the very centrality needed to preserve perfect objectivity in observing the events of the society of affluence that

attracts and repels him. But with his objective neutrality, each step that he takes is in the direction of his education and understanding of the rich, and the moral implications of their wealth. Inspite of the allurement, Nick remains discreetly aloof from the charmed circle, never losing his balance or deviating from the centre. He has an entrenched social position; his" family have been prominent well-to-do people in this Mid West city for three generations"; thus he is not a seeker after social identity as Gatsby is; nor has he an eagerness for wealth that brutalises human sensibility, and is the hall-mark of Tom Buchanan. He has the necessary moral imagination that can afford to scorn the cinematic gaudy, pretentiousness that is used to compensate the moral and spiritual hollowness of the rich.

Lower down the scales is the house of the Wilsons "a small block of yellow brick sitting on the edge of the wasteland ... contiguous to absolutely nothing", a garage and upper flat in the Valley of Ashes supervised by the diabolical and piercing eyes of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg. They too, like Gatsby, aspire for all that wealth can provide, but, unlike him, lack the superior energy of his unifying dream, the idealism that grips and possesses, and finally destroys him. The placelessness and non-belonging make it the very scum of American society. It has no dreamy, delicate quality that is an inalienable part of the metaphorical white and rosy

loveliness of the glittering white palaces of East Egg, but is the very opposite, the "shoes" of social stratum. The very location of the Valley of Ashes is significant in underscoring American placelessness:

> About half way between West Egg and New York the motor road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile, so as to shrink away from a certain desolate area of land. This is a valley of ashes --- a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens' .... Occasionally a line of gray cars crawls along an invisible track.[40]

In the Wilsons we see that the more the struggle, the more the sweat, the natural consequence of poverty. Thus money and social identity are merged. However, money fails to confer human or social values or definitions. Even those without riches like the Wilsons hankering after the East Egg-West Egg syndrome are shorn of recognition inspite of their labours.

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40. Ibid., p.18.

In Fitzgerald the Wasteland symbol assumes greater proportions than what Eliot endowed it with; it refers to change and mutability in human circumstances owing to deprivation of economic advantages. Here the redemption is necessarily human and social. Myrtle in particular symbolises the peculiar vitality which underlies the sweat and exertion of the poor and the discontented. She carried:

> her surplus flesh sensuously as some women can. Her face.... contained no facet or gleam of beauty, but there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smouldering.[41]

Even in her death her mouth is "wide open and ripped at the corners, as though she had choked a little in giving up the tremendous vitality she had stored so long".[42] George Wilson in comparison is completely opposite and seems to mingle "immediately with the ashen dust...." both in his apparent struggles as well as in his ambition.

While houses are immovable, fixed and rooted, in a world of fluctuation, the car is a symbol of mobility. It is a

41. Ibid., p.20.

42. Ibid., p.110.

recurring motif which is linked to the American search for social identity as well as what can be seen as the glamourised appearance of opulence. It is a tangible manifestation of the Kaleidoscopic identity and mobility which money makes possible. The car motif finds its most logical culmination in the performance of Daisy, who, for all her innocence, is the one responsible for a chain of murders and deaths she unleashes when she kills Myrtle with the car she is driving. But she is the very incarnation of Gatsby's dream. Her very voice is full of that quality of money which America excites:

> her low, thrilling voice. It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down, as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again.... There was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered 'Listen', a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour.[43]

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43. Ibid., p.8.

Her voice promises the kind of excitement and enlargement of life that money alone can make possible:

> 'She's got an indiscreet voice', [Nick remarked].
>
> 'Its full of ---', I hesitated.
>
> 'Her voice is full of money', [Gatsby said suddenly].
>
> That was it. I'd never understood before. It was full of money -- that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it.... High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl.[44]

The new promise of life that Nick Carraway imagines is imminent in America that summer and is linked to the image of "quick mobility road-masters",:

> Already it was deep summer on roadhouse roofs and infront of wayside garages,

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44. Ibid., p.95.

> where the new gas-pumps sat out in the pools of light.[45]

Gatsby's early courting of Daisy had his symbolic excitement in Daisy's "little white roadstar". There are several images associated with cars that excite, and no less cheat one of the promise of life because of its treacherous betrayal and killing of people. It is Daisy's voice again that misleads Gatsby and excites that "heightened sensitivity to the promise of life" which intoxicates him even to the extent of imagining the road to eternal happiness that he is following with her in his yellow Rolls Royce which becomes the instrument of Myrtle's death, foreboding his doom and ultimate death. The journey from New York to West Egg has been Gatsby's final lesson in self-deception even though it was one of those enthralling moments he had waited for; it was the moment of a life-time, in which the past melted into the harsh actualities of the present. Nick has the same presentiment when he said, "So we drove on toward death through the cooling twilight". The cars had in a sense witnessed the inside life of the rich in New York:

> at eight O'clock, when the dark lanes of the Forties were five deep with throbbing taxicabs, bound for the

45. Ibid., p.17.

> theatre district, I felt a sinking in my heart. Forms leaned together in the taxis as they waited and voices sang, and there was laughter from unheard jokes, and lighted cigarettes outlined unintelligible gestures inside. Imagining that I, too, was hurrying toward gayety and sharing their intimate excitement, I wished them well.[46]

It is Fitzgerald's own experience that is echoed:

> I remember riding on top of a taxicab along deserted Fifth Avenue on a hot Sunday night..... I remember riding in a taxi one afternoon between very tall buildings under a mauve and rosy sky, I began to bawl because I had everything I wanted and knew I would never be so happy again.[47]

Nick has already detected the hollowness, the presentation of the "voice of money" in the golden girl as phony and

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46. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "My Lost City", The Crack-up, pp.28-29.

47. Ibid., p.29.

dehumanised. He knows that Daisy's sophistication is basically insincere:

> I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said. It made me uneasy, as though the whole evening had been a trick of some sort to exact a contributory emotion from me. I waited, and sure enough, in a moment she looked at me with an absolute smirk on her lovely face, as if she had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged.[48]

In Fitzgerald's mind the associative symbolism of cars and parties has the same significance of utter irresponsibility of the rich. The same casual careless conversation marks a gathering whether at a party or in a car, the same sense of placelessness and inane drift into nowhere:

> They got into automobiles which bore them out to Long Island, and somehow they ended up at Gatsby's door. Once there they were introduced by somebody

48. The Great Gatsby, p.15.

> who knew Gatsby, and after that they conducted themselves according to the rules of behaviour associated with an amusement park.[49]

This absence of rules of responsible conduct is suggestive of the nonchalant behaviour of the rich, their affectation and insincerity. The exodus away from the Gatsby party indicates a similar lack of ethical norms and social obligations. Then there is the telephone which like the car, figures at several levels, and instrument which banishes distance and also becomes an extension of shady deals. It is a hint of marital disharmony: Myrtle rings Tom is chap.1; it is also a reminder of Gatsby's shady deals. Even at the height of his idyllic reunion with Daisy, the intervention of the telephone shows the thin borderline between Gatsby, the shady businessman, and Gatsby, the romantic; with its obvious reference to some illicit transaction it cuts into the euphoria and never allows the reader to forget the illicit source of Gatsby's wealth. Even after he dies theres a telephone call asking him for instructions.

The scene after the Gatsby party when cars cluster about, driven by drunken drivers, all in a crescendo accusing Owl Eye for the mess, venting their righteous anger, serves to

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49. Ibid., p.32.

emphasise the insolence and crudity of their life pattern. They are corruption - ridden and soiled, past all tidiness. Only Gatsby is untainted by the seething corruption of riches all round him, and is able to retain his innocence to an appreciable extent inspite of the riotous, hedonistic spree. His isolation from the rottenness is complete and unalloyed. At the end of the party:

> The caterwauling horns had reached a crescendo and I turned away and cut across the lawn toward home. I glanced back once. A wafer of a moon was shining over Gatsby's house, making the night fine as before, and surviving the laughter and sound of his still glowing garden. A sudden emptiness seemed to flow now from the windows and the great doors, endowing with complete isolation the figure of the host, who stood on the porch his hand up in a formal gesture of farewell.[50]

The moral semblance of the East and West Egg is represented by the wheels of cars. Tom's honeymoon is fraught with confusion at the exposure of his adulterousness while he:

50. Ibid., p.45.

> ran into a wagon on the Ventura road one night, and ripped a front wheel off his car. The girl who was with him got into the papers, too, because her arm was broken -- she was one of the chambermaids in Santa Barbara Hotel.[51]

Later he breaks Myrtle's nose. His double moral standard, a proclivity of the rich, which finds its reverberation in the postmortem of Gatsby's memory that Nick recalls with such overwhelming nostalgia:

> I spent my Saturday nights in New York, because those gleaming dazzling parties of his were with me so vividly that I could still hear the music and laughter, faint and incessant, from his garden, and the cars going up and down his drive. One night I did hear a material car there, and saw its lights stop at his front steps..... Probably it was some final guest who had been away at

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51. Ibid., p.61.

> the ends of the earth and didn't know that the party was over.[52]

This reliving of excitement generated by the automobile revolution, the peculiar association of party sprees with the resplendent boom and bluster of the Twenties, the enactment of new identities of the rich associated with "the white palaces" in their silvery splendour, all had been one singular effort to pander to the American dream symbolised by the voice of Daisy which was "full of money". To Fitzgerald's mind, Daisy was an apt metaphor of that moment of American history when it was still free from the corruption of material environment, and before the ideal of America was betrayed by the false glitter of wealth. Nick broods over the mystery that summer:

> And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes -- a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all

52. Ibid., p.144.

> human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity *for wonder.*[53]

Gatsby follows that trail of history without having known its peculiar demands and his assiduous pursuits of that dream of gorgeous splendour symbolised in the "green light" at the end of Daisy's dock that absorbs Gatsby in his lonely contemplation. The green light that beckons and allures anticipates his eventual doom. Inspite of the impression that the magic world has made on him, Gatsby retains his faculty for wonder, and that is his saving grace. Nick Carraway too is untouched by the loss of moral fervour and dehumanisation which infects all those who fatten on Gatsby's riches.

The cohesive meaning and idea forms a veritable tapestry of symbols with the image-pattern of cars, houses, regions, names, chronological time, flowers, colours, variations of natural hues, light and shade, sun and moon, heat and

53. Ibid., p.144.

coolness; all these fall into a symbolic pattern fashioned out of social material, and are woven into the very meaning and significance of the story. They are also manifestations of the superficialities of contemporary American commercial culture. This is expressive of Fitzgerald's attitude to the life of the rich with which he associates the world of sensual excitement, romantic splendour, night and feminine glory. Such a world of carefree existence, show and glitter is opposite to the daytime world of ruthless materialistic pursuits, the sweating hot struggles of the poor, the ferocious struggles of the rich for financial exploitation and fiscal strength, the struggle primarily for maintaining the egregious demands of the luxurious life.

The associated images have a cyclic structure that are linked in Nick's mind with the American West and the constantly changing natural cycle of the seasons. Not only is Nick the repository for the motives of all others in the story but that the shaping vision which is the real reason for his journey East is essentially a Western desire and feeling and he stands for their representative voice. He goes East not only for a particular reason but in a particular season, summer:

> And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.[54]

Summer, the season of new throbbing movements of life, was to turn into a symbol of Nature woven into the fabric of Nick's vision of life. When Nick makes his trip to New York, that new "warm centre of the world" the images that cluster in his mind are from his Western Frontier:

> When we drove over to Fifth Avenue, so warm and soft, almost pastoral, on the summer Sunday afternoon that I wouldn't have been surprised to see a great flock of white sheep turn the corner.[55]

Later, while driving to New York with Gatsby, Nick finds it "in its first wild promise of all the mystery and beauty of the world". In that great centre of the world, summer is the harbinger of dreams of love and its fulfilment. That romantic possibility is everybody's dream. Thus in Nick's

54. Ibid., p.3.

55. Ibid., p.

mind seasons are the turning wheels of nature, life preserved and life destroyed just as the circle of his journey East is his Columbus-like voyage to the new world of glittering splendour, and the voyage home to his new perception of truth and a return to where he must belong.

Nick encounters Nature in those rich wealthy surroundings as almost a casual visitor evoking perceptible "natural curiosities", with almost cinematic trickery of images, as the "great burst of leaves" growing on the trees as "in fast movies"; the kind of mark that "the thin beard of raw ivy" provides to Gatsby's "spanking new" imitation French villa thereby slightly diminishing the false rich appearance by that natural camouflage, the way nature manifested its acrobatic running, as the lawn of Tom's house:

> The lawn started at the beach and ran toward the front door for a quarter of a mile, jumping over sun-dials and brick walks and burning gardens -- finally when it reached the house drifting up the side in bright vines as though from the momentum of its run.[56]

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56. Ibid., pp.5-6.

Such playfulness of nature around the mansions of opulent rich was the taming and trimming of Nature that gives to Nick his strong sense of moral certitude, as it excites in him the sense of infinite almost magical possibilities of money. This is the intoxicating entrancing nature at the Buchanan's house:

> The windows were ajar and gleaming white against the fresh grass outside that seemed to grow a little way into the house. A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other.... making a shadow on it as wind does on the sea.[57]

It makes Nick more conscious of his uprightness. Against Buchanan's life of profligacy and easy virtue he must look back on his past, the life and values of the West. Even Tom's adultery, when it is exposed, provokes an overtly conscious response in Nick in order to keep his moral vision unimpaired. The air of moral decay at the Buchanans repels Nick though he is fascinated and awed at the power and pride conferred by wealth.

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57. Ibid., p.6.

In contrast to nature as found in the rich mansions of Long Island, in its abandon wastefulness, there is total absence of nature in the Valley of Ashes, the "desolate wasteland... contiguous to absolutely nothing" where George Wilson has his garage and dwelling place. It appears as if nature mocks itself and leaves the land barren and desolate:

> This is valley of ashes -- a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke, and finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air.[58]

Nature thus holds up to mockery both the land and the efforts of men to create harmony in human relations. George Wilson sums up what those wasteland grey-ash figures have been reduced to, sapped of all life-giving blood, energy and spirit, even fading into the cement colour of the garage wall. Though Myrtle Wilson seems to possess that "immediately perceptible vitality about her", and is thereby able to escape the fate of living death that palls the dweller of the wasteland. It symbolises the chaos and

58. Ibid., p.18.

embosoms the poverty-stricken people living in hell-hole, a limbo of dehumanised energy presided over by the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg:

> blue and gigantic -- their retinas are one yard high. They look out of no face, but instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a non-existent nose. Evidently some wild wag of an oculist set them there to fatten his practice in the Borough of Queens and then sank down himself into eternal blindness, or forgot them and moved away. But his eyes, dimmed a little by many paintless days under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn dumping ground.[59]

While nature is absent, the power that reigns is the "inscrutable power resident in the brooding, persistently staring eyes". In terms of human relevance, the significance reaches beyond the American urban setting to the "plight of man in an age of disorder" as in T.S. Eliot's The Wasteland.

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59. Ibid., p.18.

Thus in the houses of the rich nature exposes its full green heaving breast consonant with extravagance while it is conspicuous by its absence in impecunious desolation; the distinction is obvious. Myrtle, in this sense becomes a symbol of that oozing vulgarity while her money-role, see thing in actual corruption, helps her to escape her destiny. But her background of "drifting wreckage of the spiritless and defeated" binds her inextricably to the tangled web of her fate. The ironic symbolism of her positive vitality points to the ever-widening gyre of life's perversity and vulgarity, finally culminating in becoming the instrument of her ultimate ruin and death. The hinge of fate moves relentlessly.

The symbolism of nature seems to harmonise with the theme of betrayal which is basic to the image pattern of the novel. This theme had its origin in the personal experience of Fitzgerald who was deeply wounded by his wife's infidelity during their sojourn in Europe while the novel was going through its final draft. In Save Me The Waltz, Zelda recounts her affair with the French aviator, Edouard Jozan. After a quick violent climax they parted with Zelda having no way to hold onto that summer dalliance. It was this complete surrender to that moment of intense experience that made Fitzgerald write to his daughter:

> never in her whole life did she have a sense of guilt, even when she put other lives in danger -- it was always people and circumstances that oppressed her. [60]

This motif is underscored by colour symbolism in the novel. The "whiteness" tends to symbolise purity of appearances, of belonging to the established, moneyed upper class. It has the same ironic significance as does the whale in Moby Dick. The "white palaces of fashionable East Egg glittered along the water" just across the Courtesy Bay which Gatsby must inevitably traverse in order to step closer to his dream. The brilliance of gleaming gold as appearances of procured money is the very image of New York City "rising across the river in white heaps and sugar lumps all built with a wish out of non-olfactory money". The whiteness in this sense represents those who have made the grades to the upper echelon of society. Daisy and Jordan always appear in the cool, white elegance of the immensely rich living in the moonlight dream world of brightness and glamour. To Gatsby that illuminated glittering world, which he aspires for, is the whiteness of evil, corruption and vulgarity which are the realities embodied in the Valley of Ashes, and is suggestive of the once brilliant dream, now withered. The culmination of that dream was Daisy who even in her younger

60. Letters, p.226.

days, when she was the most popular of all the young girls in Louisville, dressed in white and had a little white roadstar parked outside her big white house; as she tells Nick, "Our white girlhood was passed there..... Our beautiful white....."

The first things that Dan Cody buys Gatsby when he is first launched into the new world are six pairs of white duck trousers to wear on the white yacht. Daisy's house is "beautiful and cool" and the "sidewalks was white with moonlight. Gatsby weds Daisy to his dream among the silver stars "as Daisy's white face came up to his own". When Gatsby and Daisy meet again, Daisy's:

> porch was bright with the luxury of bought starshine.... and Gatsby was overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves, of the freshness of many clothes, and of Daisy, gleaming like silver, safe and proud above hot struggles of the poor.[61]

It is the world of money, silver and gold, that is the characteristic image of Daisy in Gatsby's imagination. Even

61. The Great Gatsby, p.119.

in that perfect moment of love when Gatsby says goodbye as hes going to the war, Daisy escapes into her Fay House, her world where "a hundred pairs of golden and silver slippers shuffled the shining dust" at society tea dances. At the lavish party that he gives to attain a glimpse of Daisy, he dons the colours of money that give a gloss of respectability emphasising that he belongs to the upper class: "An hour later the front door opened nervously, and Gatsby in a white flannel suit, silver shirt and the gold-coloured tie, hurried in".[62]

The Demaine house too has white windows gleaming against the green that surrounds the fantastic Buchanan mansion. Under the "frosted wedding cake of a ceiling" the girls inside were both in white. White symbolises a conscious effort to give a respectable hue to the dubious means through which wealth has been acquired. All these characters thriving on tainted wealth are so punctilious about the white colour which is traditionally symbolic of purity, piety and the like. Obviously, it is a deliberate, desperate bid to white wash evil. In other words, they are driven to resort to this with a view to making their reputation and appearance blameless and innocent by covering up their black deeds. Such a dominance and power is implied in Tom's so called ethnic superiority. The fear of the white race being

62. Ibid., p.66.

submerged by black and coloured is ingrained in the economic and social fear of losing the dominant position in American society where money is the safest guarantee of social status and respectability. Tom accuses Gatsby of being "colored"

> I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr. Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife. Well, if thats the idea you can count me out.... Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions, and next thing they'll throw everything over-board and have inter-marriage between black and white.
>
> "We're all white here," murmured Jordon.[63]

Except for the "colored" Gatsby, who is infact pure and innocent, all other "whites", "whole rotten 'crowd" is corrupt and impure. The irony never fails in its impact. If white is a symbol of purity then atleast Tom needs to be excluded from that term and has the least right to deprecate the "colored" Gatsby or the Jew, Wolfsheim. While Tom asserts white supremacy, "if you're white you're all right",

63. Ibid., p.103.

as the song goes, the symbolic strains of Mendelssoh's Wedding March sound loud and clear from the ballroom below reverberating memories of the white trains, white veils, and the white vows of matrimony that Tom and Daisy had made. At that moment Daisy is already in the process of separating, being "divorced" from Gatsby. Even the virginal glowing white dresses of Daisy and Jordan proclaim not their purity and innocence but their essential social "rightness" and symbolise a life of luxury, leisure and security, as equally the futility of their existence. Such pointless rambles of their lives show moral vacancy. Whiteness is simply a ruse and pertains to their own self-deception of which they pretend not to be aware. The significance of white extends to all levels of contact.

The name Daisy itself suggests the flower image with the golden centre and the white radiance around. It is the "day's eye", and represents the sun, the golden sunlight. Her maiden name Fay implies the sense of fate, faith or the world of fairyland expectations that had made Jay Gatsby pin his hopes on, under the impression that the rock of the world was founded secretly on a fairy's wing. She is thus, to Gatsby's imagination, an object that evokes faith in the "heightened sensitivity to the promise of life" and romantic possibilities, and her reversion is his "huge incoherent failure." Daisy is thus America, the faith and hope that

inspired the pioneers; Gatsby's desire to possess her is symbolic of the possession of white and gold as emblems of universal desire and longing; his fall implies the structure of moral values that must crumble when the dream has vanished.

Gatsby's longing for Daisy is associated with light and coolness, night, starlight and moonlight, pale moons and silver stars. His entertainment of his guests recalls cool evening hours "as the earth lurches away from the sun". Twilight and darkness are moments of romantic excitement. However, in the swift transition of events when Gatsby's dreams turn into disillusionment with the changing seasons, he still remains cool even in his death, using the "pool" for the last time which he had left unused all summer. Ironically, he died not of the cool silver white of his hot pursuing dream that burnt his desire to over-reach himself in recapturing "the warm, old world" but of the indifference of this new raw world's coldness in which he "must have .... shivered" before that moment of death. The symbol of whiteness comes into full view in the death of Myrtle Wilson; all that cool silver whiteness that had once been the elegance of the wealthy now symbolises the betrayal of the starlit dome of dream and moonshine of Gatsby's imagination.

The other money colour image is gold, and in its glow and grandeur it matches silver though as a sun colour, with its warmth and solidity, it is an opponent to Gatsby's moon dream and its cool silver light. However, the moral implications of both the money colours are the same. The most obvious gold imagery is the "golden, girl", Daisy at the centre of Gatsby's universe, symbolising the "incorruptible dream". The gleaming windows and golden garden for his parties has a multi-coloured background for all shades of gold: the station wagon that brought guests from the railroad to the mansion "scampered like a brisk yellow bug"; there were "crates of oranges and lemons", and "pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold" were served to "yellow cocktail music"; "two nameless girls in yellow" talk to Jordan, their "slender golden arms resting on Nicks arm". When Daisy meets Gatsby at Nick's house, she glows into the "twinkle-bells of sunshine" after the rains, and "the two brass buttons on her dress gleamed in the sunshine". In Gatsby's garden which rivals Tom's burning and pungent lawns, the flowers include "sparkling jonquils .... and pale gold odor of kiss-me-at-the gate". Even Gatsby's own bedroom is "the simplest room of all --- except where the dresser was garnished with a toilet set of pure dull gold." At the party Daisy offers "her little gold pencil" in case her address is needed; she is the golden girl and is susceptible to corruption of gold-crusted evil, Gatsby's car

is a "nice yellow one", the "Yellow Rolls Royce". When the front of his house catches the light it is filled at earliest dawn with "gray-turning, gold-turning light". Then Wilson's garage is concretised in the yellow brick and ashen gray; the pale colour of his skin and his blond, yellow-gold hair all symbolise debasement.

The symbolism of the golden sun as a thread running in the motif of the novel is noticeable in that compact Hotel Plaza scene on the hottest of that brutal summer day from where the convoy leaves on its murderous journey. Gatsby's dream of the golden moment has no chance of lasting as the premonitions are obvious ;" it is a moment of regeneration, of beginning again portended by a natural symbol of fertility, the pouring rain".[64] The gold underscores the motif of betrayal and is synonymous with the fierce blazing sun representing the brutalisation of the power of money, Gatsby's meeting with Wolfsheim and Nick's first introduction to him takes place on a "roaring noon", and as the sun's heat increases Gatsby's moon dreams start to melt and he heads for death and ruin. Daisy's marriage with Tom is associated with summer heat and sunshine, and their honeymoon is a three months trip to the South Seas. Gatsby is a moon person but he accepts the sunlight world and plunges into it. At the Plaza Hotel, when Jordan, in

64. Robert Sklar, The Last Laocoon, p.184.

response to the floating sound of the Wedding March says, "Imagine marrying anybody in this heat", Daisy's perfectly timed rejoinder identifies her completely with Tom and the glaring heat that typified their honeymoon, "Still... I was married in the middle of June". That reminiscence strips away the veil of Gatsby's world of white silver moonshine dream in which Daisy was the golden girl.

The interlaced imagery of colours, the patterns of gold, white and red become manifestations of gold, silver and copper that are linked to the names of great American fortunes built out of exploitation of these metals: the Western success story of Dan Cody who was:

> a product of Nevada silver fields, of the Yukon, of every rush for metal since seventy-five. The transactions in Montana copper that made him many times a millionaire.[65]

Fitzgerald's preoccupation with names associated with great American fortunes formed part of his own background. It was the financial success of his grandfather, McQuillan that became a fact of immense social and economic significance to Fitzgerald's own latent urge to achieve success of the same

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65. The Great Gatsby, p.79.

measure and an impetus to work his way upward and find a niche in the American aristocracy. Even the names of Montana, Nevada, Cody recall the aroma of romance of money linked to the hunger of the American dream. The money and romance become associated with its betrayal by women, invariably Westerners; Ella Kaye in the case of Dan Cody and Daisy in the case of Jay Gatsby. In the end Gatsby is left "watching over --- nothing"; he doesn't receive part of the inheritance Dan Cody had willed him; Ella Kaye maneuvered it that way; Daisy too deprives him of the "gold hat" he should never wear. The dream he had woven round Daisy was to be sold to Tom Buchanan's three hundred and fifty thousand dollar pearl necklace. The choice is before her on the night before her marriage: Tom and his money symbolised by the necklace and Gatsby with nothing but his delicate dream of love and vague expectation of the future. She spurns the latter with its unpromising ethereality and chooses solid earthliness i.e. Tom who stands for American materialism, security and convenience that enticed the whore, America, that has sunk to the quagmire and grossness. That night when she was drunk, she summoned her dreams and could go back to the blazing glory of the dream of love which would soothe her frayed nerves. But once sober, she bargained for a future of certainty. She holds up Gatsby's letter in the bath and once it is reduced to pulp it loses its tenacity and spell on her. Thus the love vision of Gatsby melts, once

the cold fact of money smashes her dream, and reality is opened up for her. Gatsby is left once the dramatisation is over.

Gatsby's father had believed that had Gatsby lived he would have been great; "Jimmy was bound to get ahead. He always had some resolves" of building up the country like great names in American fortune, names associated with the colours of money James J. Hill, Dan Cody and Ulysses S. Grant. But that was an illusion. Owl Eyes had known Gatsby closer and reserved an epitaph for his implicit belief in the magic of money and immense possibilities inspired by his dream that read, "The poor son-of-a-bitch". All Gatsby's dreams had their equivalents in the American past wrapped up in the inestimable corruption of great American fortunes; they would be clothed in the "gorgeous pink rag" of a suit that he wore as an insignia of the tribe of the rich and corrupt; he had been enticed as a youth by the vision of Dan Cody's yacht which represented beauty and glamour:

> reveries provided an outlet for his imagination, they were a satisfactory hint of the unreality of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing.[66]

66. Ibid., pp.78-79.

Once Dan Cody takes Jimmy Gatz under his wings, Gatsby's education in American wealth and its acquisitions with its sinister economic possibilities has begun. He must go Fast where his driving imagination, with his given pluck and luck, would tide him over well beyond the cheap vulgar crowd that flocks to his mansion:

> I disapproved of him from the beginning to end.... His gorgeous pink rag of a suit made a bright spot of colour against the white steps, and I thought of the night when I first came to his ancestral home three months before. The lawn and drive had been crowded with faces of those who guessed at his corruption -- and he had stood on those steps, concealing the incorruptible dream, as he waved them goodbye.[67]

That world had found its summation in Tom's pearl necklace that Daisy had married. She was eager and panting for the show of wealth: "They're such beautiful shirts..... It makes me sad because I've never seen such -- such beautiful shirts before." Symbolically, the silken folds of the shirts

67. Ibid., p.123.

epitomise the substantiality of wealth that irritably allures and dazzles Daisy into betraying Gatsby for lack of such "fins and wings". However, after his splendid success, the past which he had made his determined bid to win was the backdrop to his future aspirations. Symbolically such a demand of Gatsby's upon her, was nothing but the inexorable demand of American imagination upon an America that lacks the strength to bear the burden of the ideal:

> He talked alot about the past, and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps that had gone into loving Daisy. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all; slowly he could find out what that thing was.[68]

His allurement is the uncompromising idealism, irreconcilable to the prevailing actualities which are characteristic of American society.

Another pervasive colour having gold-power is green. The "green breast of the new world" in its lush luxuriance

68. Ibid., p.88.

parallels the rose in its bursting of new life symbolised in the bristling new leaves of summer. Nick had gone East in search of that new life, leaving the lushness of the green West behind but had found the promise of a burgeoning money-summer instead. Green is also like the other colours a symbol of the betrayal of the dream. As a symbol, it is invariably the "green light" at the end of Daisy's dock. When Gatsby and Daisy are to meet at Nick's, house, Gatsby wants the grass at Nick's clipped to the same" well-kept expanse" as his own glowing gardens and emerald lawns. He starts talking of money, corruption, favours for pecuniary gains and Wolfsheim in the same breath as he talks of the green lawns. He is wearing a "torn, green jersey" when he sights Dan Cody's yacht. At his party when Daisy is thrilled with the promise of excitement, she whispers:

> "If you want to kiss me any time during the evening, Nick, just let me know and I'll be glad to arrange it for you. Just mention my name. Or present a card. I'm giving out green".[69]

The soft summer heat enlivens deep green shades and foliage, sprigs of mint and cool fresh long drinks, something like a fresh green promise of a new world. Thus the colours are

69. Ibid., p.

surface appearances which sizzle underneath, seething with corruption and treachery; even green is simply a surface allurement. When George Wilson discovers betrayal and is sick and without money, "in the sunlight his face was green". In keeping with Gatsby's mistaken identity, his golden white car, after the murder, is given out as light green by a witness. Gatsby's own sense of betrayal comes through in the thinness of "the scarcely created grass", not the lush green lawns. His dream is wrapped up in the true pure green not to be mistaken for the colours of the corrupting force of money; it is the green of the past now enshrined in memory of Nick's "long green tickets" of the thrilling returning trains of his youth; the green of the American promise "that flowered once for Dutch sailors eyes -- a fresh, green breast of the new world". This shows how even colours have imbibed the taint breathed out by the pervasive corruption. The green light at the end of Daisy's dock is the signal for him to pursue his perennial quest and it leads him on to the "orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us"; the past cannot be recaptured but the future holds out the promise of tomorrow being another day; "tomorrow we will run faster stretch out our arms further .... And one fine morning --". The symbol serves as the connective element between Gatsby's personal tragic fate and the larger historical sense in which American civilization itself is perilously close to the national tragedy. The

green light is the enchanted object so long as Gatsby's illusions are intact but as the symbol inexorably moves to the novel's conclusion its full implications as "the historically corrupted religious symbol" become clear. Fitzgerald had realised that the conscious repudiation of the abstracting and inhibiting tradition of the American past, the historical necessity, moral and social accountability entailed self-delusion and ended in tragic waste. This is perhaps what T.S. Eliot had in mind when he wrote to Fitzgerald, complimenting him on his achievement in The Great Gatsby:

> Such a remarkable book. Infact it seems to me to be the first step that American fiction has taken since Henry James.[70]

The golden moment had slipped away from his grasp forever, the never-to-be second chance was over, the inevitable lay beyond the veil of illusion, and time was slipping back to its inexorable point of no return. Gatsby was aware that he:

> had passed visibly through two states and was entering upon a third. After his embarrassment and unreasoning joy he was

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70. Quoted, Alfred Kazin, F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work, p.93.

> consumed with wonder at [Daisy's] presence. He had been full of the idea for so long, dreamed it right through to the end, waited with his teeth set, so to speak, at an inconceivable peak of intensity. Now, in the reaction, he was running down like an overwound clock.[71]

This, time imagery is significant in effecting a symbolic transcendence of the dream that might have been but which was snapped before its orgiastic moment, and what could be "almost remembered was uncommunicable forever". It is the old America that keeps returning in memory to what this young America might have been, the America which in its nostalgic recall was the best main chance and the best hope when:

> for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent.... face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.[72]

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71. The Great Gatsby, p.73.

72. Ibid., p.144-145.

Gatsby in himself symbolises that golden moment. In the final act of self-realisation, as he "disappeared among the yellowing trees" he must have felt an acute sense of betrayal:

> He must have looked up at the unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing arose is and how raw the sun-light was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about.[73]

Fitzgerald makes flower imagery stand in relation to colours of gold and silver, sun and moon, heat and coolness, reality and dream, seasons of arid summer and fallow autumn. The rose too connotes the rosy colour and richness of the world of wealth. Red of the rose has money associations, Montana copper red, red and gold bindings of Nick's readings of Morgans, Mycaenas, Midas. Tom's mansion is a red and white Georgian, colonial; his garden is red and gold; it has a sweep of deep pungent roses". There is a wine coloured rug and crimson carpet. In this "bright, rosy coloured space" everybody takes on to the colour; even Nick reminds Daisy

73. Ibid., p.129.

"of a -- of a rose, an absolute rose," though he admits that he's not even faintly like a rose. In this world, appearances are all, reality is nothing. The rosy setting conceals the sinister reality of Tom's adultery. The house is like a full-bloomed rose and it brightens when the lights are turned on at dusk, but the canker worm is prowling about between the soft, fragrant petals, gnawing away at the innocence and beauty. *This is also the world of* Gatsby's gaudy dreams where he "lived like a young Rajah... collecting jewels, chiefly rubies". Nick thinks, "I saw him opening a chest of rubies to ease, with their crimson-lighted depths, the gnawing of his broken heart."[74]

Even the main decor of his room takes on the gaudy resplendent colours of his dreams; "his period bedrooms swathed in rose and lavender silk and vivid with new flowers". As Gatsby and Daisy look out from the bedroom window, "there was a pink and gold billow of foamy clouds above the sea", and she wanted to put him in "one of those pink clouds". Gatsby must live by appearances so wears the colours of money, but pink symbolises the innocence he retains in a decadent society. Once the incorruptible dream is shorn of its rosy, white and silver glow, he realises that the rose is a grotesque thing. This is the price he pays for his fatal destiny, of "living too long with a

74. Ibid., p.53.

single dream". However, Gatsby, inspite of his surreptitious covering is not unaffected. Rose, like white and gold, symbolises the shirking of moral responsibility that would have preserved his identity. As casual rumours float:

> One time [Gatsby] killed a man, says one of the young ladies, moving somewhere between his cocktails and his flowers... He killed a man who had found that he was nephew to Von Hindenberg and second cousin to the devil. Reach me a rose honey, and pour me a last drop into that there crystal glass.[75]

Thus flowers too like cars, clothes and the cuff links of Wolfsheim are symbols of rich appearances. Colours not only camouflage Gatsby's mysterious past, shroud his dream and make viable the certainty of his identifiable present but they (red, green, white, silver and gold) become national emblems of America symbolising the promise and golden moments.

In America the summer moments linger as a prolonged Christmas, cheerfulness. The association of Gatsby's summer parties with the gorgeous Christmas tree symbolises the

75. Ibid., p.48.

continuing promise of the perennial American festival of summer, of bursting exuberant fresh new life with all the attendant gaudy colours of wealth. But Daisy betrayal smacks of the destruction by wealth of the identity he has tirelessly built and the falsity of the dream. Then "the pouring rain [which is] a moment of regeneration, of beginning again, portended by a natural symbol of fertility", at Gatsby's funeral becomes the autumn rain of death. Similarly, flowers had symbolised the life of his illusions in Daisy but when she marries Tom, she passes into the "dying orchids on the floor beside her bed". He had sent her heaps of flowers but she hadn't flowered for him. At his funeral Nick sends flowers and "could only remember .... that Daisy hadn't sent a message or a flower".

Fitzgerald modelled Gatsby after several actual shady characters for whom he had unmistakable fascination. He gave Edmund Wilson a description of one such character:

> Hes a gentleman bootlegger: his name is Max Fleischam. He lives like a millionaire. Gosh, I haven't seen so much drink since Prohibition.... Well, Fleischam was making a damn ass of himself bragging about how much his tapestries were worth and how much his

> bathroom was worth and how he never wore a shirt twice and he had a revolver studded with diamonds.[76]

Fitzgerald had the keenest eye for people, places and things, and he had lived in the Jazz Age not without the knowledge that illustrious people were invariably connected with dubious business dealings. To get money was the only aim of the Twenties, and men were esteemed according to what they were worth, that is the money they possessed. Even the Church sanctioned this passion for wealth and clergyman assured their 'flock' that God approved business callings and rewarded virtue with wealth, and prosperity was a gift of God. In such a milieu, Moses was conceived as a real-estate promoter and Christ himself as the founder of modern business. This doctrine was taken to an absurd extreme whereby contemporary gangsters and business tycoons such as Arnold Rothstein were celebrated and made into heroic figures. Rothstein fascinated Fitzgerald too; not only his glamour but his capacity to move with equal ease in the worlds of the rich and shady; infact his shady enterprises did not affect his social standing and he was seen in the company of respected society figures whom he entertained in his Park Avenue apartment. He was "a walking bank", the

76. Quoted, Arthur Mizener, The Far Side of Paradise, p.128.

pawnbroker of the underworld, the fugitive, "the unhealthy man who sidled along doorways". He dealt in racing, bootlegging, baseball, boxing, gambling, selling stolen gems, and brothels. He was "the Morgan of the new plutocracy, its banker and master of economic strategy". Then there was Fuller who had, under the pretext of bankruptcy, embezzled, six million dollars of public money. Fitzgerald told Perkins he had studied the case thoroughly Another, Larry Fay legend of the new plutocracy was who had a passion for Bond street creations.

Fitzgerald modelled the pet phrases which give distinct identity to Gatsby after contemporary underworld jargons. So that Gatsby shouldn't remain "blurred and patchy", he gave him a twentieth-century British "upperclass slang term, "old sport".

The very name Gatsby amalgamates several motifs. The change of name Jimmy Gatz to Gatsby becomes a significant pointer to the motif of violence. Alexander R. Tamke has noted:

> 'Gat' was widely understood as a common underworld synonym for pistol, apparently derived from the similar appellation of the Gatling gun (a fore-runner of the machine gun): 'gat' began

> to be applied to the revolver, became thoroughly established slang during the teens and 20s. When the prevalence of 'gat' is remembered, Fitzgerald's choice of name for his gorgeous gangster emerges as ideal for his literary purposes, in view of the unmistakable if ill-defined connotations with the criminal elements which Fitzgerald's crook-hero possesses as the lieutenant of the racketeer Wolfsheim.[77]

The name has further symbolic overtones. Recent critics have seen another significance in Gatsby keeping the "business as religion" motif in view. David F. Trask has argued that while it is known that the inspiration for the novel came from Fitzgerald's chance encounter with a Jewish bootlegger, the change of name gives intimation of "Jewishness" in the hero, a view supported by the frequency of the name Jay among Jews. Trask further says, "Could it be, however, unlikely, that he was rendering the literal 'Jesus, God's boy' in the name Jay Gatsby", (In ordinary pronunciation, the 't' easily changes to 'd' as in 'God'). This conjecture might appear hopelessly far-fetched were it not for

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77. "The gat in Gatsby: Neglected Aspect of a Novel", Modern Fiction Studies xiv, pp.443-5.

Fitzgerald's discussion of Gatz's 'Platonic conception of himself' and his direct use of the phrase' son of God'".[78] Thus through a brilliant cultural and semantic blend, Fitzgerald points out that God's boy is at the mercy of the violent.

However, Fitzgerald confessed with regard to Gatsby, "I never at any time saw him clear myself -- for he started as one man I knew and then changed into myself -- the amalgam was never complete in my mind". As such "Gatsby is revised not so much into a real person as into a mythical one: what he is not allowed to distract the reader from what he stands for."[78a] He became an over reacher, a twentieth-century version of Icarus so that the American dream became a metaphor for the essential human ambition to transcend limitations.

In the brave new world, "the colossal vitality of [Gatsby's] illusion" implies dreams of the romantic self which could be realised only in the America of his imagination. Fitzgerald summed up the essence of this dream and expectation in his short story "The Swimmers":

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78. Quoted, Arthur Mizner, The Far Side of Paradise, p.214.

78a. Kenneth Eble, The Great Gatsby: The Novel, The Critics, The Background, p.115.

> The best of America was the best of the world.... France was a land, England was a people, but America, having about it still that quality of the idea, was harder to utter..... It was a willingness of the heart.[80]

The idea and the vision of America was greater than even the possibility and promise of American actuality; greater than the gaudy splendours of its riches, lavish possessions and plenitude. It is in this "magical glory" of Gatsby's world wherein lies the meaning of his self-surrender and sacrifice to his secret hope, aspiration and dream -- the re-enactment and retrieval of the past -- that allures and destroys. The heightened expectations of the promise of life, with which the book begins, is maintained to the last, even to the ultimate vanishing of illusions. The process of the novel's main action however, tends towards energising the vision of triumphant glory. It moves towards that emotionally surcharged moment when Gatsby's loss of illusions creates the haunting ambience of the loss of the glory and the dream. This lingering sense of loss of a past is the pervasive nostalgic ethos of the novel that

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79. F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald ed. Malcolm Cowley, p.325.

Fitzgerald wrote about to Roger Burlingame, an editor at Scribners:

> I was tremendously pleased that it [The Great Gatsby] moved you in that way -- 'made you want to be back somewhere so much' -- because that describes, better than I could have put it myself, whatever unifying emotion the book has either in regard to the temperament of Gatsby himself or in my own mood while writing.[81]

The vision of glory ends in disenchantment and shattering of the veil of illusions. In a deeper vein it was Fitzgerald's summation of his own feelings and "wise and tragic sense of life". In its ultimate form the novel:

> indicates how compellingly and cohesively Fitzgerald had finally merged his vision, his memory, and his materials into a moral history of the meaning of America.[82]

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80. Letters, p.498.

81. Milton R. Sterne, The Golden Moment, p.288.

The playboy of the Jazz Age, the exemplar of the lost generation had written a universal fable which records with unerring insight the basic existential dilemma:

> The courage of despair, the experience of meaninglessness, and the self-affirmation inspite of them.[83]

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82. Paul Tillich, The Courage To Be (London, 1964), p.140.

CHAPTER V

DECADENCE OF AMERICAN SOCIETY

I see thy glory like a shooting star
Fall to the base earth from the firmament.
The sun sets weeping in the lowly west.
(William Shakespeare)

CHAPTER V

Decadence of American Society

Fitzgerald's novelistic concern had changed from mere dramatisation of moments and situations to a closer scrutiny of the moral transformation of an era, of society and moral transformation in the West. The result was Tender Is the Night, a psychological novel. However, it is not only a witness to an era but something more; it is an intense exploration of the human situation at a momentous juncture, the turning point in a nation's cultural and moral change.

Though the novel was rewritten several times between 1925 and 1934, and the titles too underwent several changes (Our Type, The Boy Who Killed His Mother, The Malarkey Case, The World's Fair, The Drunkard's Holiday, Doctor Diver's Holiday), there is a consistent thematic pattern which unfolds itself through various episodic scenes of action, vivid and vibrant as movie stills, and which have been invariable and constant through all the changes in plot and character, deletions and recreations of scenes and moments. This is the social high life of expatriate Americans in Europe and is the expose of all the major scenes and actions in the novel, the brilliant social life of the French and Italian Rivieras during the summers in the Twenties that finds their graphic description in Fitzgerald's own words:

> The gay elements of society divided into two main streams, one flowing toward Palm Beach and Deauville, and the other, much smaller, toward the summer Riviera, and whatever happened seemed to have something to do with art. From 1926 to 1929, the great years of Cap d' Antib'es, this corner of France was dominated by a group quite distinct from that American society which is dominated by Europeans.[1]

These were years of compulsive wasteful expenditure of moral and material resources, leading eventually to the crack-up and depletion of his spiritual energy, of economic and emotional sustenance. On 12th June, 1940 he wrote to Scottie:

> I am [crippled] by my inability to handle money, or my self-indulgence of the past .... What little I've accomplished has been by the most laborious and uphill work, and I wish

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1. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Echoes of the Jazz Age", The Crack-Up, ed. Edmund Wilson, pp.18-19.

> I'd never relaxed back -- but said ...'I've found my line -- from now on this comes first. This is my immediate duty'.[2]

In December, 1940 he again wrote to her, and we find the same despair and disillusionment at his failure:

> I am still in bed.... You have got two beautiful bad examples for parents. Just do everything we didn't do and you will be perfectly safe. But be sweet to your mother at X'mas. Her letters are tragically brilliant on all matters except... those of central importance. How strange to have failed as a social creature -- even criminals do not fail that way.... But the insane are mere guests on earth, eternal strangers carrying around broken decalogues that they cannot read.[3]

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2 The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Andrew Turnbull, p.95.

3. Ibid., p.117.

The superficial vitality of Euro-American life is recreated and presented as, "the flashing world of 'broken decalogues' most likely to unhinge and undo the innocent seeker or whatever is left of the responsible, polite personage in a society in which the old virtues and graces no longer defined people, success or social life itself".[4] The corrosion of values had led to the disintegration of the personage in a destructively acquisitive and exploitative society. This is what he referred to when he wrote to Scottie in July, 1938:

> Often I have encouraged [your being an old fashioned girl] because my generation of radicals and breakers down never found anything to take place of old virtues of work and courage and the old graces of courtesy and politeness.[5]

It was this social heritage, essentially which led to the emotional collapse of Nicole -- Zelda, and provided the main focus of the novel in its final form. The stench of ruin was all over and unmistaken in the first mental breakdown of Zelda in the Spring of 1930. Fitzgerald could realise how the novel must grow out of his own floundering life, tossed

4. Milton R. Sterne, The Golden Moment, p.292.

5. Letters, p.51.

on the sea of the unrepentant alcoholism and Zelda's recurring nervous disorders. In The Beautiful and Damned the voice of failure had been sounded in the slow but inevitable disintegration of Anthony Patch. By 1932, with Zelda's second and more severe emotional collapse, a more dense character of the psychiatrist, Dick Diver had emerged and the incarnation of "the authority of failure" was complete.

What remains constant and unchanged through all the versions that Tender Is The Night went through is the high life of elegance, ease and irresponsibility as in The Beautiful and Damned, and more. The novel's essential focus is on "the leisure class... at the truly most brilliant and glamorous", the life of the Americans on the Riviera and the larger "glittering golden world in its effect on the yearning, searching American, on the bitter arrivist .... the strong and callous more appropriately what Fitzgerald himself, had given in the brief final plan of the book:

> The novel should do this. Show a man who is a natural idealist, a spoiled priest, giving in for various causes to the ideas of the haute bourgeois, and in his rise to the top of the social world losing his idealism, his talent and turning to drink and dissipation.

> Background one in which the leisure class is at their truly most brilliant and glamorous such as the Murphys.[6]

For Fitzgerald the most representative American in Europe who would belong to the sparkling "leisure class" with all the virtues and graces of the old and charming, now vanished, world of politeness, courage and courtesy with a premium on work and responsibility were Gerald Murphy and his wife, Sarah. But equally, the Murphys were a product of the new American world that had emerged in the wake of the crumbling barriers of the old order after World War I, the era of gorgeously rich metropolitan gaudiness resultant upon inordinate predatory wealth that devastated and ruined the old, gracious way of life.

Gerald and Sarah Murphy became prototypes of the composite that formed the characters of Dick Diver and Nicole Warren. Their world, in more sense than one, epitomised the glamour, charm and graciousness of a lost past that the gaudiness of wealth would recapture as the new promise of American life. Such a charmed possibility had so much captivated Fitzgerald that he wanted an imaginative re-possession of that life of golden moments recreated in the pages of the novel. It was in such a world that Fitzgerald's "strenuous social

6. Quoted Arthur Mizner, The Far Side of Paradise, p.331.

appetites" could find their gratification at their fullest and could sustain his appetite for imaginative splendour. But the touch of disaster and ruin implicit in the hidden recesses of the world of money and social advantages and cultural accomplishments, of independence and gaiety, was something as part of reality of personal and universal experience, of limitations imposed on human actuality, as Dick Diver was to realise "that the price of his intactness was incompleteness". Dick's veritable immersion in self-ruin too had a touch of Murphy's private misfortunes but Dick too is a composite of Fitzgerald's own sense of personal failure and ostracism, the private chaos, confusion, great disaster and moral let-down.

The one single overt fact of Dick's ruin is his excessive and deliberate dissipation. Such tensions and ambivalences as might be incumbent on a bacchanal sensibility was the very identity of self that Fitzgerald was constrained to impose on the character of Dick. His fictional self was immersed in the unreality of alcoholic haze and was expressive of Fitzgerald's deep intoxication by wealth and the power and privileges it conferred. Fitzgerald had understood the nature of this new world for wealth as being more deprived of spiritual and cultural values, and different from the "safe, beautiful world" of Dick's dream. The old world of grace and virtue, charm and passion, hope

and promise now relegated to an older America that the pioneers had dreamed of now forever lost and buried with the dead dreams and heroes. Fitzgerald was thus preoccupied with the double vision of wealth; one, predatory, exploitative, rapacious and corrupt, and the other promising fulfilment and a life of virtue, grace and unlimited possibilities. In the novel he chose a "philosophical" attitude to enforce his perspective of two Americas; one of the past and forever buried, the other, new, emergent, quickened with energies of acquisitive wealth and attendant complexities of its material actuality unlike what was past and had faded like a dream, what Fitzgerald had portrayed in The Great Gatsby. In Dick Diver, Fitzgerald had chosen the true representative of both the Americas, "the spoiled priest" who was destroyed by intemperance, and yet the doctor psychiatrist who was a self-proclaimed redeemer of the world, ruined by his own responses to court love and social approval as his deepest spiritual need, and what could well cure the spiritual malaise of an ailing world. It was Scott Fitzgerald that he was imaginatively recreating in his fictional characters, as he admitted to Laura Guthrie, his one-time secretary:

> My stories get truer and truer, I can't keep the truth out of them. I am part of the race consciousness and so have influenced the language of youth and

> youth itself.... [My characters are] not any single person but a melange of the characteristics of several people interpreted through my eyes.... I am an intuitive introvert. I take people to me and change my conception of them and then write them out again. My characters are all Scott Fitzgerald.[7]

It was the same with Dick who restored to people their essential identity by recreating them: "It was themselves he gave back to them, blurred by the compromises of how many years". So neat was Dick's blending of his character with others whom he knew and loved that:

> for the remainder of his life.... [He] was condemned to carry with him the egos of certain people, early met and early loved, and so be only as complete as they were complete themselves.[8]

What Fitzgerald was trying to recreate in Dick was his own self and his talent to make "goodness" survive in the genuine creation of art. He believed Tender Is The Night to

7. Quoted, Andrew Turnbull, Scott Fitzgerald, p.263.

8. Tender Is The Night, p.263.

be an effort in that direction and thus his most thorough and profound though complex attempt in creating possibility for goodness. It was a personal "confession of faith" as he wrote to his friend Elizabeth Lemmon, to whom he inscribed a copy of the novel. He was putting all that he had experienced and learnt about life, his hard earned beliefs in the book:

> That work was the only dignity; that it didn't help a serious man to be too much flattered and loved; that money and beauty were treacherous aids; that honour, courtesy and courage -- the old fashioned virtues -- were the best guides after all.[9]

Art was the only possible discipline to create the ambience of operative goodness:

> I've got to be good and I can be in my work. I must be loved. I tip heavily to be loved. I have so many faults that I must be approved of in other ways... I create a world for others. Because of this women want to go away with me, they

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9. Quoted, Andrew Turnbull, Scott Fitzgerald, p.247.

> think the world of delight I make for them will last forever. I make them seem brilliant to themselves and most important.[10]

It is the same urge to create a world for others pleasure that prompts Dick Diver to put all his talent into it, to project his dream of goodness into it, and in doing so to be destroyed by it. His own goodness proves the key to his self-ruination, for goodness in his case becomes a self-destructive impulse. It is always Dick's longing for a "fulfilled future and the wistful past" that become the acute impulse with the increased awareness of the destructive present and the charmed way of life that vanished into it. Somehow all these random ideas, gathered from his own experiences, came to acquire a relevance in terms of the specific milieu and the moment in his personal history as well as the history and culture of his nation. The Murphys had the same relevance for him; writing to Sarah Murphy, Fitzgerald declared:

> I am too moved by what I am saying [about you] to write it as well as I'd like. You are part of our times, part of the history of our race. The people

10. Ibid., p.265.

> whose lives you've touched directly and indirectly have reacted to the corporate bundle of atom thats you in a good way. I have seen you again and again at a time of confusion take the hard course almost blindly because long after your powers of ratiocination were exhausted you clung to the idea of dauntless courage".[11]

Afterall, Dick's personal heritage is one of the lost past of America, and its virtues of honesty, politeness, courage and courtesy were a veritable guarantee against the destructive wastefulness of money, talent, social manner or lives. His sense of values that can sustain the burden of self-destructive impulses had changed; he wrote to an old-school conservative, Mrs Bayard Turnbull:

> For me the test of human value is conformity to the strictest and most unflinching rationality, while in your case it is based on the standards of conduct. I don't mean that because Rousseau's life was disordered, an intellectual should use that to justify

11. Letters, p.443-44.

> his own weakness, nor that my criteria necessarily subsumes yours, but I must think, they do even though I continually check up by seeing the lives of "orderly" people, judging whats fake and what's real.[12]

The sense of personal failure and ruin had given him a kind of early romantic maturity of emotional consciousness, something that kept the illusion intact for him and gave his life and his highly excitable imagination a magical glory for his mind possessed an exhilarating quality of delightful excitement of bewildering curiosity and wonder, and unlimited hopeful, expectations. But it was always "felt experience", the keen sensibility and nostalgic memories that counted in his judgement of values rather than cold bare rationality. In this sense maturity was equivalent to goodness, albeit a rational responsibility.

The ability to clean up the mess of one's life through a rational order that Nick Carraway had achieved in The Great Gatsby, the Buchanans could never manage in the same novel, nor could the Warrens in Tender Is The Night, for Fitzgerald, in being able to impose that rational order upon his characters, could make possible romantic creativity

12. Ibid., p.456.

through romantic consciousness that kept in check the invariable impulse to destruction. In Tender Is The Night, Fitzgerald made an arduous effort in asserting goodness against what could effectively destroy his ability to create. This was his test of a first rate intelligence that would be "the ability to hold opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function".[13] But the hold of rational maturity upon romantic sensibility and temperament to keep the above destructive impulses under check is extremely fragile, Dr. Dick Diver loses his self control and rational discipline, both what he wished to preserve Nicole against, and what his own need for love was.

There is a double focus of scenes and events in meaningful co-relation: The external one being on the inevitable disruption of the older order yielding place to the new, the break-down of all moral and social barriers of grace, virtue and responsibility, the internal one is on the disintegration of the self. The disciplined romantic idealism corrupted by material actuality or the appurtenances of wealth. The loss is of the rational order that could make the goodness prevail over the rampant destructive forces. But it is also the loss of the good that Fitzgerald hoped to achieve in writing the book and effacing

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13. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Crack-Up", The Crack-Up, ed. Edmund Wilson, p.69.

the blurring distinction between himself and Richard Diver, for Dicks fall from grace provided, the fictional statement of Fitzgerald's autobiographical pieces in The Crack-up articles of 1936 Dicks fall is a form of symbolic disintegration of the social world of post-war America in particular and the collapse of Western Civilization in general that found its most terrifying articulation in Oswald Spengler's The Decline of The West

In a poignant reminiscence of what he thought had been the loss of charm and grace of friendship and all that summed up the image of Dick having "dived" from grace and promise into the chaos and confusion of his self, Fitzgerald in great pain, yearning for lost youth and hope, wrote to Zelda a few months before his death:

> Twenty years ago This Side of Paradise was a best seller and we were settled in West port. Ten years ago Paris was having almost its last great American Season but we quit the gay parade and you were gone to Switzerland. Five years ago I had my first bad stroke of illness and went to Ashville. Cards began falling badly for us too early. The world has certainly caught up in the

> last four weeks [Nazi invasion of Holland, Belgium and France in 1940]. I hope the atmosphere in Montgomery is tranquil and not too full of war talk.[14]

For Fitzgerald the sense of disaster and impending ruin was not simply an exercise in literary convention as it was for some of his contemporaries, but it formed the very inner milieu of his innate, tragic imagination and found its legitimate expression in the exploration of human destiny in war-torn Europe and how such individual destinies were crippled and ruined by the designs of a world gone wild and demented by something which was drained of all sanity and humanity, blurred by the new unreal reality. The European years of Fitzgerald between 1924 and 1929 were largely responsible for the kind of attitudes that eventually shaped the social and political realities of those European years into coherent symbols of desolation and decline of a generation. The novel was crowded with such scenes and events set in post-war Europe with changed realities and a general air of poisonous stench of spiritual disintegration and decay of civilization and way of life. Many characters in the novel have real human contours that crowded Fitzgerald's memories. Thus a new insight, value and meaning was added to facts giving imaginative significance to the

14. Letters, pp.137-38.

truth. Abe North in his essential Americanness has the tragic predicament of Abraham Lincoln:" His voice was slow and shy; he had one of the saddest faces Rosemary had ever seen, the high cheek bone of an Indian, a long upper lip, and enormous deepest golden eyes".[15] Such a parallel has larger symbolic import since in the pervasive metaphorical use of war Fitzgerald makes World War I a telescopic enlargement of the American Civil War. This finds credence in the general meaning of the novel which has the consistent motif of war being the instrument of the end of innocence, the end of the older America and its graces and virtues made dissolute by corruption linked to the image of General Grant who was, nevertheless, the apogee of great future promises of the American vision. The debauchery and corruption of that promise is the typical American dilemma. Dick too stands in symbolic association with Grant in his early promise as well as the betrayal of that promise. He is "Grant lolling in his general store in Galena ... ready to be called to an intricate destiny". Dick ends his early promise not very unlike the General, in the utter oblivion of dissolution, irrevocable and certain ruin. Nicole, with the hindsights of history, has a speck of hope even in the irreparable loss of old confidence in Dick who, as she thought, "must be" biding its time again like Grant's in Galena. She turns full circle in Abe Norths eyes "bloodshot

15. Tender Is The Night, p.64.

from sun and wine", and her incestuous father Devereaux Warren's "sun-veined" eyed red with whisky. It is this world of Buchanan, Warren and Barban whose "sun" leaves its blinding impact on the Lincoln and Grant image of the American promise. The eyes have the symbolic distortions of the internal moral collapse; the increased desire followed by a retreat into the irresponsibility of wealth makes Abe North wish about prolonging his state of irresponsibility. It is a moral paralysis that destroys the early promise of Dick Diver. He courts death in drink and dissolution. Fitzgerald indicts his American generation in the fate of Dick Diver, and enhances the meaning of its American national identity by associating historical parallels with his personal foibles of incurable alcoholism and consequent self-deprecating death-wish which is pernicious, not only in abusing the resources of the great talent and promise Fitzgerald saw as a possibility of the American dream, but also denying fulfilment to the immense reach of that promise as the apex of national aspiration.

In as much as Nicole is the fictional portrait of Zelda, the association gains in importance in the merging specifics of the personality of Zelda through her mental illness. Nicole's schizophrenia provides the central symbol of the novel. But what underscores the deeper significance of this relationship, the fictional representation of the facts of a

living reality, is the increasing complexity of sexual motifs in a world of blurring distinction of personal identity where values have been submerged in the nightmare holocaust of moral dissipation and dissolution, the same sun-strong world of moral and rapacious lust as is the world of The Great Gatsby. Tom Buchanan and Tommy Barban are the end in view of that sun-drenched world. The strong stench of their physical power and arrogance, their arrogance of money, their existential ennui of pointless drifting through life, their fretful lives of feverish ambition having no imaginative direction or goal. Tommy Barban:

> was tall and his body was hard but overspare, save for the bunched force gathered in his shoulder and upper arms.... There was a faint disgust always in his face which marred the full fierce luster of his brown eyes. Yet one remembered them afterward, when one had forgotten the inability of the mouth to endure boredom and the young forehead with its furrows of fretful and unprofitable pain.[16]

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16. Ibid., p.74.

Tommy Barban is a type Fitzgerald had always despaired of being. He was insensitive and unaccommodating to the world of men:" He did not like any man very much or feel men's presence with much intensity -- he was all relaxed for combat".[17] His values are the ones that require and evoke admiration for physical immediacy. He is devoid of all human sophistication and sensibility for this is not the code of values he respects. His strength lies in the power of the hard world of money and hard actualities. For him there is no female sympathy or moonlight dreams; he is out to combat and conquer. He and Tom Buchanan represent the simplified hard values of money culture, of barbarism, and are opponents of what Dick Diver and Jay Gatsby are supposed to represent, the complex but polite contours of imaginative civilisation which appeals to modern sensibility, the graces and virtues of by-gone days that the Murphys also represent. Such intricate autobiographical links of memories and associations in the composite material of his characters illuminates the larger meaning that emanates from the inner life of these characters, but more importantly of the author himself.

Fitzgerald's insistence upon these virtues and graces seems to be his search for the only weapon that could combat and challenge "the world of intensifying disintegration" which

17. Ibid., pp.213-14.

was predictably the moral and material consequence of the European aftermath of war. Milton Stern feels that the novel is about" break-downs" of human relationships, of marriages and individuals but, more significantly, of the Western World in the aftermath of the war. What was happening around Fitzgerald had, in varying degrees, a relevance to his own past and self; his crack-up symbolised the disintegration of a generation. Thus he could impose a discipline upon himself and his generation only through his art and talent for creating imaginative, albeit real sympathy for the rebellion of his flaming youth. This was his strategy of reconstructing his own past as also the past of his generation. Goodness was the key to enter that bygone world. A year after the publication of the novel he repeated the same theme to a friend in a letter:

> Your charm and heightened womanliness that makes you so attractive to men depends upon what Ernest Hemingway called "grace under pressure". The luxuriance of your emotions under the strict discipline, which you habitually impose on makes that tensity in you that is the secret of all charm.
>
> -- You have got to be good.

> -- Your sense of superiority depends upon the picture of yourself as being good, of being large and generous and all comprehending, and just and brave and all forgiving. But if you are not good, if you don't preserve a sense of comparative values, those qualities turn against you -- and your love is a mess and your courage is a slaughter.[18]

Doctor Diver was supposed to have learned and comprehended the meaning of goodness as a trained psychiatrist who could trust and be good to a patient like Nicole Warren. Even Dick would bring up his daughter to be a woman, not a wife, and as Fitzgerald wrote to Helen Hays:

> The human machinery which controls the sense of right, duty, self-respect etc. must have conscious exercise before adolescence you don't have much time to think of anything.[19]

Richard Diver had been uncertain and "uneasy about what he had to give the ever-climbing, ever-clinging, breast

18. Letters, pp.548-49.

19. Ibid., p.575.

searching young" though he would make his daughter responsible in her social allegiances.

Fitzgerald continued to be obsessed by his own misgiving as he expressed to John O'Hara in a letter:

> Again and again in my books I have tried to imagine my regret that I have never been as good as I intended to be (and you must know that what I mean by good is a personal conscience, and meaning by the personal yourself stripped in white midnight before your own God).[20]

Dick Diver too, in the end, when he cracks under the agonising pressure of professional defeat and personal failure, in a morally sick world he knows to be incurable, has no choice but to draw upon moral and emotional resources which are all but exhausted and bankrupt. He turns to the one safe niche of the old lost world and the possibility of its retrieval, "We must all try to be good". Dick believed in the possibility of total fulfilment through discipline, hard-work, courage, courtesy and grace. Similarly, America too could be cured of disintegration through the application of these old-world truths. However, Dick becomes a victim of

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20. Ibid., p.558.

of his intricate destiny that his brave new world destroyed. With him declines the older, saner America, the hope and dream of his innocent Youth. Dick was destroyed by the romantic charm when he dissipated his talents and his precious possession of self-discipline and cultivation of old virtues and graces in pandering them to satisfying the egos of Nicole Warren and others of his charmed circle who came within the spell of his magic. This was a drift into inanity, pointless and irresponsible like the aimless drift of the Buchanans like the dog biscuit which "decomposed apathetically in a saucer of milk all afternoon". It is destructive of everything, friendship, self, personal exuberance and charm. He realises how deep has been his alcoholic dissipation and slow but mercilessly inevitable disintegration: "I guess I'm the Black Death.... I don't seem to bring people happiness anymore". Before his own death, Fitzgerald too mourned the long years his ordeal of destruction and ruin:

> Once I believed in friendship, believed I could (if I didn't always) make people happy and it was more fun than anything. Now even that seems like a vaude-villain's cheap dream of heaven, a vast

> minstrel show in which one is the perpetual Bones.[21]

Such a tension and conflict between two opposed forces is his double vision. His indictment of the flaming youth of his generation was essentially a critique of his own conception of the golden girl myth which contained his own vain-glorious impulsive destructiveness. The golden girl's desire to triumph over the youth of that generation is infact the triumph of selfishness, lust, vanity, impulsive action, irresponsibility, carelessness and everything that leads to emotional and moral emaciation.

The sexual identities of the male and female seem to break the barrier of socially recognisable norms and represent a vaster collapse. In the world of the golden girl and her vain self-indulgence each loses his identity: men in pursuit of wealth, brutish and exacting, pander to the female whim and fancy; women use up all the energies of men which destroys both. Nicole's gorgeous, interminable shopping forays and inessential buying are symbolic of her wasting male energies:

> Nicole bought from a great list that ran two pages and bought the things in the

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21. Ibid., p.308.

> windows besides. Everything she liked that she couldn't possibly use herself, she bought as a present for a friend. She bought colored beds, folding beach cushions, artificial flowers, honey, a guest bed, bags, scarfs, love-birds, miniatures for a doll's house, three yards of some fine new cloth the color of prawns. She bought a dozen bathing suits a rubber alligator, a travelling chess set of gold and ivory -- bought all these things not a bit like a high class courtesan buying underwear and jewels, which were afterall professional equipment, but with an entirely different point of view.[22]

What Nicole does with her apparently innocuous spending becomes essentially what Fitzgerald saw the entire national effort being geared toward pandering to the "bitch-gooddess" of moneyed success. The entire nation was bewitched by the corruption of the rich as if the American promise of good life was simply an enticement to the blandishments of the new woman, the golden girl:

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22. Tender Is The Night, p.113.

> Nicole was the product of much ingenuity and toil. For her sake trains began their run at Chicago and traversed the round belly of the Continent to California; chicle factories fumed and link belts grew link by link in factories; men mixed tooth-paste in vats and drew mouth-wash out of copper hogsheads; girls canned tomatoes quickly in August or worked rudely at the Five-and-Tens on Christmas Eve... These were some of the people who gave tithe to Nicole and, as the whole system swayed and thundered onward, it lent a feverish bloom to such processes of hers as wholesale buyings, like the flush of a fireman's face holding his post before a spreading blaze. She illustrated very simple principles, containing in herself her own doom, but illustrated them so accurately that there was a grace in the procedure and presently Rosemary would try to imitate it.[23]

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23. Ibid., pp.113-14.

Nicole is the symbolic incarnation of the splendid gorgeousness of what the American civilization prizes as its epic creation. Rosemary, the innocent, still unspoilt girl, too, in time, imitates and becomes the very being the very personage who contains all the destructiveness concealed within the surface gloss of glittering fascinating life of the American rich, something that everyone hungers for despite its implicit destructiveness. It is the perfect beatitude, the gorgeous beauty of the American moneyed imagination, alluring and attractive, brutish and energetic, voluptuously enticing but what simultaneously destroys and ruins; the female who destroys, be it Daisy or Nicole, is no less predatory than the male, be he Tom or Gatsby, who had exhausted his energies for accumulating predatory wealth.

In Tender Is The Night these relationships become intertwined in the blurring identities, in their sexual, economic and national aspects for everyone owes his existence and place in that world of predatory pursuits of uniform goals, the golden girls and the golden moments. They all seem to pursue the goals set for them by Dick and Nicole, the world of intermingling nationalities of the Riviera beaches. But Dick has laboured to restore Nicole to her normal social life, and in the process his energies are completely sapped and consumed by her. The same American

creative energy is symbolised in Abe North and that too Nicole uses up. Such an impulsive self-indulgent world exhausts spiritual resources and Dick cracks; Abe North too is tired and exclaims, "Tired of women's worlds". It costs Dick his self discipline and courage; they are sacrificed to the dreams of Nicole, and his "goodness" is exhausted; this is similar to Gatsby being destroyed by his faithful devotion to his "single gorgeous dream", Daisy. What Nicole possibly struggles against is her release from Dick's elaborate self-discipline and goodness to find her impulsive sexual gratification in her liberated moments with Tommy Barban at "this taming of women"; he had "brutalised men into shape" but he wouldn't try that with women. However, "her heart leaped up and then sank faintly with a sense of what she owed Dick" because she owed her sanity and health to Dick and his qualities. Once she is restored to normality she becomes the golden girl with her hot-cat pursuits, behind her is also the sun-male world and her voice too jingles like money.

Tommy Barban is aware of this freedom of money that Nicole has. When she tells him what she owed Dick, he corrects her, "You've got too much money, thats the crux of the matter. Dick can't beat that". This is a similar situation to what Gatsby had faced. Dick loses Nicole in the end, and his male superiority disappears as symbolised in the Aquaplane scene;

his energy has deserted him and all that is left is the empty gesture without moral authority. Meanwhile Nicole's new freedom makes her relapse into irresponsible naked primitivism; she finds unrestricted female sexual identity, unguided and uncontrolled by her husband. Tommy's assertion seemed

> to absolve her from all blame or responsibility and she had a thrill of delight in thinking of herself in a new way. New vistas appeared ahead, peopled with the faces of many men, none of whom she had, she need obey or even love. She drew in her breath, hunched her shoulder's with a wriggle, and turned to Tommy.
> "Have we got to go all the way to your hotel at Monte Carlo?"[24]

Deliberately she pealed off the veneer of virtue and discipline that Dick had wrapped round her to protect her against anarchic self-indulgence and self destroying sexual gratification. In doing this she passes into another kind of madness:

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24. Ibid., p.312.

> Moment by moment all that Dick had taught her fell away and she was ever nearer to what she had been in the beginning [the golden girl of the Warren -- American identity], prototype of that obscure yielding up of swords that was going on in the work around her. Tangled with love in the moonlight she welcomed the anarchy of her lover.[25]

Nicole cuts herself free from Dick's moral shackles, and, paradoxically, arrives at a moment of personal decision where she is more bound than free. However she has used Dick and destroyed him, but she can't forget him.

Rosemary Hoyt seems another interchangeable form of Nicole. She is advised and encouraged by her mother in her affair with Dick. Her youthful innocence permits her to be gay and careless, free and irresponsible. She is not burdened with what might be the possible consequence of the Dick-Nicole relationship. She can, and does it under the guidance of her mother:

> You were brought up to work -- not especially to marry. Now you've found

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25. Ibid, p.316.

> your first nut to crack, and its a good nut -- go ahead and put whatever happens down to experience. Wound yourself or him -- whatever happens it can't spoil you, because economically you're a boy, not a girl.[26]

Those who plunge into Dick's world have their own sanity restored but fail to gain an understanding of his redemptive powers; hard realities curtain off Dick's own disciplined self-sacrifice and indirectly spells his doom. The surface glitter blinds everyone to Dick's inner depths. Like others, Rosemary too responds:

> whole heartedly to the expensive simplicity of the Divers , unaware of its complexity and its lack of innocence, unaware that it was all a selection of quality from the run of the world's bazaar; and that the simplicity of behaviour also, the nursery like peace and goodwill, the emphasis on the simpler virtues, was part of a desperate bargain with the gods and had been attained through struggles she could not

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26. Ibid., p.98.

> have guessed at. At that moment the Divers represented externally the exact further-most evolution of a class, so that most people seemed awkward beside them -- in reality a qualitative change had already set in that was not at all apparent to Rosemary.[27]

Though Dick, among all the Fitzgerald heroes, has the qualities and talent of the complete hero, what he endeavours to nurse back to health, sanity and civilization has a quality of doomed epical strain. The world that awaits the cured is one of relapse into chaos, corruption, irresponsibility and near-madness. Nicole's adolescent incest repeats itself once her released and liberated ego finds itself bound to Tommy Barban. The kind of freedom that Dick envisaged for Nicole was prohibited by the new world of the Buchanans, Warrens and Barbans. Security and an extension of the self are not guaranteed by wealth or sexual liberation but by responsibility born of shared discipline and dependable personal identities.

But Dick is owned, and his "pretense of independence" is futile. It is the "emergent Amazons" that own him for he has been made vulnerable through his pride. He can't keep up

27. Ibid., p.77.

pretenses and manners; the frilliest social artificialities cannot last after the morale has cracked. He is constrained to tell Baby Warren:

> Good manners are the admission that everybody is so tender that they have to be handled with gloves. Now human respect -- you don't call a man a coward or liar lightly, but if you spend your life sparing people's feelings and feeding their vanity, you get so you can't distinguish what should be respected in them.[28]

Dick becomes naturally embittered when he sees the futility of his sacrifice to make Nicole human. Her humanity turns against him, turns her freedom loose, sinking in the bog of harsh and rotten reality beneath the surface glitter of appearances. However, she too, far from living a full new life in her new freedom in the brave new world, fails to survive in her new identity for its like all the battle, either you "win a pyrrhic victory" or face wreck and ruin -- either way it is a self-defeat and destruction. She knows she is there "as a symbol of something" that Dick should understand. Her so-called cure by the psychiatrist is simply

28. Ibid., p.193.

her finding of "a greater sickness", though she is sure that something ought to come out of it. Dick knows, "He stooped and kissed her forehead", and he whispered, "We must all try to be good".

It is then Rosemary who, while Nicole sinks and promise fades, reminds Dick of the future that could be redeemed in the imagined youthful past that she promises for she retains a child's innocence, and as Dick tells her, "you're the only girl I've seen for a long time that actually did look like something blooming". Her very name, "dew of the sea" recalls nostalgia of youth, past hopes, memories and dreams, the rejuvenescence of that golden moment that Isabelle evoked in This Side of Paradise. She reminds one of the effervescence of the movie world of Hollywood, unreal and dream-like, a symbol of what is tawdry, shallow, inane, almost dehumanised yet having the radiance of a gorgeous illusion, perfect but brittle at the touch of reality as Fitzgerald would depict in The Last Tycoon. But youth in Dick's world of imagination is an object elusive and of wistful longing, the symbol of insubstantial and intangible yearning that must elude realisation and fulfilment. It does not endure, and maturity and age overtake it. Rosemary too must face her enemy, the corrupted world of commercialised glitter and pretence of love that people on the Riviera beaches represent. Once that happens, Dick, who has been desperate in seeking the

restoratives of spiritual energy seeks out Rosemary now mature and of lost youth. He hunts her in his mad pursuits and at last grasps the moment that had long eluded him: "She wanted to be taken and she was, and what had begun with a childish infatuation on a beach was accomplished at last."[29] With that surrender to lust, Dick and Rosemary, as Nicole and Tommy, destroy for themselves what a dependable relationship might have been in nursing old dreams of life in a new world full of promise and wondrous possibilities. Only hard-skinned sun-drenched and desensitized people like Tom Buchanan and Tommy can survive in such an ethos.

Nicole throws away her chances of cure and survival like that rare and unavailable camphor-rub which she gives to Tommy for his cold. Symbolically, the gesture is one where she acts defiantly and irresponsibly and throws Dick for Tommy. Dick, the Doctor who with patient care and self sacrifice had enhanced her life is tossed away as are the graces he and their life stood for. It is the harshness of reality that smashes "the illusions of eternal strength and health... the essential goodness of people". Dick had once imagined his goodness to be his sheet anchor: "He used to think that he wanted to be good, he wanted to be kind, he wanted to be brave and wise... he wanted, wanted to be

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29. Ibid., p.231.

loved".[30] But he ultimately realised the futility of it all; life was essentially the surface smear of glided corruption, selfish irresponsible where each squanders his chances and fortunes in meaningless pursuits. Nicole can't be saved because she doesn't wish to be saved, and goes back to the incurable, incestuous Warren world where she feels she belongs:

> If my eyes have changed its because I'm well again. And being well again perhaps I've gone back to my true self -- I suppose my grandfather was a crook and I'm a crook by heritage, so there we are.[31]

The white crook's eyes, indeed, reflect her true self.

Nicole, Rosemary and Mary North, all three have a resemblance and differ from many American women in that

> They were happy, to exist in a man's world -- preserved their individuality through men and through opposition to them. They would all three have made

30. Ibid., p.23.

31. Ibid., p.311.

> alternatively good courtesans or good wives not by the accident of birth through the greater accident of finding their man or not finding him.[32]

Such women, Gausse confesses "have never [been] seen before". Gatsby, Dick and North follow the green light, stake all they have only to be bankrupted and broken forever. But Dick and North are different:

> Dick Diver came and brought with him a fine glowing surface on which the three women sprang like monkeys with cries of relief, perching on his shoulders, on the beautiful crown of his hat or the gold head of his cane. Now for a moment, they could disregard the spectacle of Abe's gigantic obscenity.[33]

Mary North altogether changes after the controlling brakes have been removed, once her husband dies. Her symbolic role can be seen in her relationship with Lady Caroline, who, is the liberated young woman with the strength of evil,

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32. Ibid., p.111-12.

33. Ibid., p.145.

incarnate of the new gilded world of hot pursuits. It is moneyed smugness whether with Lady Caroline or Baby Warren.

Baby Warren knows how far they can "use" Dick for Nicole's illness. She must "buy her a nice young doctor " with whom Nicole could fall in love, and then the rest of the mess of her life could be left to his care; in this way Nicole could "get out of the atmosphere of sickness and live in the world among the 'right' people"; the proper world envisaged by Baby Warren is the English society. She wants to have her responsibility shifted on other people who can be used at will; when she bails Dick out of the jail in Italy, she

> had the satisfaction of feeling that whatever Dick's previous record was, they [the Warrens -- crooks, mess-makers, incestuous, responsible for Nicole's breakdown] now possessed a moral superiority over him for as long as he proved of any use.[34]

It was her moment of moral triumph since it gave her a sense of socially acceptable appearance which was her conception of morality. Money consciousness makes her attitude harden into a cool, calculating experimental gesture, almost like

34. Ibid., p.253.

her grand-father; she conceived human relations only in terms of "usefulness". She acts like her grand-father who was a founder of the great American predatory wealth. She knows of Dick's usefulness to her and Nicole, but she is completely imperceptible to his graces, virtues and self sacrifice; she is unaware of all that extra he had put into his marriage with Nicole just as she is unaware of the cause of her sister's schizophrenia. When Dick mulls over what it cost him in the transference needed to cure Nicole, he tells Baby Warren:

> "Its possible I was the wrong person for Nicole.... Still, she would probably have married someone of my type, someone she thought she could rely on -- indefinitely".
>
> "You think she'd be happier with somebody else?" Baby thought aloud suddenly. "Ofcourse, it could be arranged".
>
> Only as she saw Dick bend forward with helpless laughter did she realise the preposterousness of her remark.
>
> "Oh, you understand", she assured him. "Don't think for a moment that we're [the Warren pride] not grateful

for all you've done. And we know you've had a hard time".[35]

When, in the end, Nicole decides to leave Dick, she makes, it clear to her sister that he can't simply be discarded as something insignificant; he had meant alot and she owed him her six years of health, sanity and protection atleast. But Baby Warren's response is cool, hard and impersonal, "Thats what he was educated for". The clean-sweeping, irrational temper "that had broken the moral back of a race and made a nursery out of a continent" had defeated Dick and all that he stood for. The war was over and he had lost. When he refused to seduce Rosemary, he had said, "So many people are going to love you and it might be nice to meet your first love all intact, emotionally too." This not only was an old fashioned idea, but what "healthy" men expected; perhaps someone like Tommy Barban wouldn't have had such scruples. Rosemary symbolised what growing up meant for the new post-war generation; she too hardens and matures, "Do you mind if I pull down the curtain?" "Please do. Its too light in here".[36]

Baby Warren's rescue of Dick is his moment of his final defeat. The metaphor of "Daddy's Girl" for her is

35. Ibid., p.233-34.

36. Ibid., p.374.

Fitzgerald's symbolic dramatisation of the American national aspirations for adolescent culture and values during the twenties. It was adult abnegating of moral responsibility. Nicole's 'white crook's eyes", ironically noticed by Tommy Barban, tend to simplify the moral complexity of the dilemma: "So I have white crook's eyes, have I? Very well then better a sane crook than a mad puritan". It sums up the two worlds, the old and dying, outmoded puritan morality and the emerging, eager, youthful, new generation. However, in the novel, the basic issues are beyond the surface themes of sexual freedom and national solidarity just as in The Great Gatsby bootlegging is far from the major concern.

The symbolic implications of names and characters pertain to dissolving of national identities in terms of moral evaluations as was the co-mingling of sexual identities, male and female. In the intentional conglomeration of the European Riviera, there is a confusion of one's origin, name and character. They have symbolic, even allegorical function as the novel itself is prophetic, even a apocalyptical. Almost like the names in their confused order in Nick's old railway time-table of those who came to Gatsby's parties, here it is Tommy Barban's copy of the New York Herald in the American-Parisian paper. The names are hilariously amusing with ironic undertones:

> "Well, what nationality are these people?" demands the half American Tommy, reading with a slight French into-nation. "Registered at the Hotel Palace at Vevey are Mr. Pandely Vlasco, Mme Bonneasse -- I don't exaggerate -- Corinna Mendoca,Mme Pache Seraphim Tullio, Maria Amelia, Roto Mais Moises Teubel, Mme Paragois, Apostle Alexandre, Yolanda Yosfuglu and Geneveva do Momus".[37]

Nicole adds Mrs Evelyn Oyster and Mr. S. Flooh; Mary North becomes Contessa di Minghetti; Conti di Minghetti though Italian enough in its association is ruler owner of manganese deposits in south-western Asia; he was the Kabyle-Berber-Sabaean-Hindustrain that beats across North Africa; yet the name of this Hindu is only a "papal title". Names are also deliberate insertions to indicate certain characteristics: Barban for Barbarian, Campion for Camp which in American slang means pretentious gesture flaunting homosexuality and proclaims Campion's surreptitious activities. Altogether the Riviera atmosphere blurs cultural-national-linguistic segregations and distinctions. Not only that, it symbolises draining out of humanity from

37. Ibid., p.73-74.

the human substratum in this new golden world of gilded corruption: "Here and there figures spotted the twilight, turning up ashen faces to her like souls in Purgatory watching the passage of a mortal through;"38 The 'her' is Rosemary Hoyt and she is co-starring with a French actor in a film directed by an English director, Earl Brady; McKisco sounds like "a substitute for gasoline or butter"; Abe North as Mr. Afghan North is a queer twist of personal identity; the French Negro restauranteur is confused with an American Negro, introduced as one Mr. Jules Paterson of Stockholm.

A boat is a typical Fitzgerald symbol for exploitative and rapacious wealth of the American rich, be it Dan Cody's yacht or the "Margin" on which Lady Caroline is introduced to Golding. Appropriately enough, the news broken to Rosemary of Dick's disgrace and defeat is from some State Department people on the boat -- Europeanised Americans who had reached a position where they could scarcely have been said to belong to any nation at all. In the new post-war dispensation, all old inherited dependabilities are discarded or have minimal distinguishable recognition.

The metaphor of war provides the continuing motif in the novel, summing up the broken lacerated sexual and national identities in sweeping moral and spiritual disintegration.

38. Ibid., p.79.

War has been the barrier between the old vanished world of Dick's idealistic vision destroyed by the new lust and greed for sexuality and money. Money and sex are the explosives unleashed by war, and are all pervasive. Rosemary's hair is" "an armorial shield of love - locks and gold". Tommy Barban's speech is ridden with war talk. Though the most denationalised of all characters, he is associated with war, uniforms and going to war (which side he fights on is not significant); war is mentioned in his conversation in the most careless and irresponsible manner. The Negroes in their deadly fiasco are referred to as a tracking war party of "hostile and friendly Indians". The new woman is the "emergent Amazon". Thus the war with its brooding, undulating quality permeates the very background of the novel. The old order of established mores, manners and dependable identities succumbs to the birth of a new generation in the convulsions of World War I when things fall apart and the centre cannot hold. When Dick visits the battle fields with Rosemary and Abe North, he deeply regrets the irretrievable loss while he is able to comprehend the meaning of terrible death:

> All my beautiful, lovely safe world blew itself up here with a great gust of high explosive love... This Western Front business couldn't be done again, not for

> a long time.... This took religion and years of plenty and tremendous sureties and the exact relation that existed between the classes... You had to have a whole-souled sentimental equipment going back further than you could remember. You had to remember Christmas, and post-cards of the crown Prince and his finance, and little cafes in valence and beer gardens in Unter din Linden and weddings at Mairie, and going to the Derby, and your grandfather's whiskers... This kind of battle was invented by Lewis Carroll and Jules Verne and whoever wrote Undine, and country deacons bowling and marines in Marseilles and girls seduced in the back lanes of Wurttemberg and Westphalia. Why this was a love battle -- there was a century of middle class love spent here. This was the last love battle.[39]

Dick's romantic notions are understandably what he does not clearly comprehend but he knows what has vanished with war forever:

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39. Ibid., p.117-18.

> "I couldn't kid here", he said rather apologetically. "The silver cord is cut and the golden bowl is broken and all that but an old romantic like me can't do anything about it".[40]

Perhaps his romanticism compels him to believe in the unlimited possibilities of the new promise since the bleakness of the past has not yet clouded the future hopes. In the restaurant with Nicole and Rosemary, Dick sees "the goldstar muzzers" come to visit their son's graves:

> Over his wine Dick looked at them again; in their happy faces the dignity that surrounded and pervaded the party, he perceived all the maturity of an older America. For a while the sobered women who had come to mourn for their dead, for something they could not repair, made the room beautiful. Momentarily, he, sat again on his fathers knee, riding the Mosby while the old loyalties and devotions fought on around him.

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40. Ibid., p.118.

> Almost with an effort he turned back to his two women at the table and faced the whole new world in which he believed.[41]

The pathos of this nostalgia for the past is almost a summation of what was emerging on the horizon in the aftermath of World War I. He could visualise the past; what he needed was a little ruin. However, the nostalgia of the ruined battle fields almost bore a faint resemblance to one of his own parties; his war continues between the old world values and the forces of disintegration; his own parties acquire the mood and moment of war; with their flotsam of cosmopolitans they resemble the irremediable sick world bent on annihilating its saviour and redeemer; he now becomes increasingly aware of sacrificing his energies to the futile amusement of the younger generation:

> The reaction came when he realised the waste and extravagance involved. He sometimes looked back with awe at the carnivals of affection he had given, as a general might gaze upon a massacre he had ordered to satisfy an impersonal blood lust.[42]

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41. Ibid., p.162.

42. Ibid., p.84.

This is almost like Gatsby who had tried to turn his dream into reality. It is, infact, a war of attrition. In the scene where the woman shoots down her man, Dick reports that "she shot him through his identification card". This is identifying his own disintegration and externalising it; till now it had been concealed within his mind. His defeat, helplessness and weakened energy become manifested in his vague unassertive poses and impotent attitudes.

As Dick becomes psychologically incapacitated and ineffectual, Nicole takes over; even his old armament with which he had combatted the onslaught of the new value system had become futile. She too had sucked him dry because "that was what he was educated for". However he remained firm in service though he unconsciously bid goodbye to his visions, dreams and ideals; he confirmed this when he bade farewell to Mrs. Elsie Speers, Rosemary's mother, and said, "My politeness is a trick of the heart".

In curing Nicole, he has lost his identity and is defeated because afterall she is the "emergent Amazon" and cannot be educated in the graces of the old world. She:

> began to feel the old hypnotism of his intelligence, sometimes exercised

without power but always with substrata of truth under truth which she could not break or even crack. Again she struggled with it, fighting him with her small, fine eyes, with the plush arrogance of a top dog, with her nascent transfer to another man, with the accumulated resentment of years; she fought him with her money and her faith that her sister disliked him ...her health and beauty against his moralities --for this inner battle and courageously with .... the empty receptacles of her expiated sins, outrages, mistakes. And suddenly, in the space of two minutes she achieved her victory and justified herself to herself without lie or subterfuge, cut the cord forever. Then she walked weak in the legs and sobbing coolly, toward the household that was hers at last.

Dick waited until she was out of sight. Then he leaned his head forward on the parapet. The case was finished. Doctor Diver was at liberty.[43]

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43. Ibid., p.319-20.

Both were free; she retreated into her money, but he became a non-person; he was no Lazarus that could resurrect himself from the dead. The ending of the novel, Dick's fading out into insignificance in America "in that section of the country, in one town or another", is exceedingly moving and tactful.

> The suggestions of a breakdown on a vaster scale arise out of the failures and compromises of the individuals, and not the other way round. So it is right that the book should close anticlimactically with the reports of Dick's return to America, their distancing effect suggesting his tired emptiness of ambition and vitality, his being at the lowest curve of his brilliant boom.[44]

It is Dick's "intricate destiny" to represent through his own progressive decline and degradation, the painful loss of his personal self and that of the nation and humanity. It is because he began with a period of colossal illusions like Gatsby, "the illusions of a nation" that his romantic hopes

44. John Lucas, "In Praise of Scott Fitzgerald", The Critical Quarterly, Vol.5, No.2 (Summer, 1963), pp.146-47.

were sustained and strengthened. Besides, he was equally gifted with the trained and ordered intelligence of a psychiatrist, and had an enormous faith in the indestructibility of his self against any odds, even marrying Nicole, his one continuing liability for life. His belief in his capacity to redeem and cure the irremediable is part of his illusion for he is oblivious of the destructive element concealed in his dream.

Nicole symbolises the decay and death implicit in Dick's illusions that keep him forever hoping and bringing him "the essence of a continent". The imperative need that he feels in serving to heal her to the extent of sacrificing his happiness in marrying her is a typically American response to the fascination of the challenge to overcome the insurmountable; metaphorically, the frontiers were not receding but assuming different connotations; it was the fascination of the overwhelming American past that evoked such appeal for the promise of the hopeful future in Dick: "The post-war months in France, and the lavish liquidations taking place under the aegis of American splendour, had effected Dick's outlook".[45] If Dick symbolises the creative vision of America's expectant romantic hopefulness, Nicole is the symbolic representation of the utmost corruption of the American wealth and its lavish splendour, the other more

45. Tender Is The Night, p.23.

cogent meaning of America, the brave new world. Like Dick, the Warrens too stand for America, but an America predatory and rapacious in its commercialism, the emergent America, different and indistinguishable from Europe that still cherished older values and cultures. American wealth is not immune to incestuous corruption as represented in Devereaux Warren for whom money is no object but is aligned to his basic irresponsibility and acquisition of power. He is responsible for the mess of Nicole's life, yet not only does he run away and shirk his responsibility, he even makes Baby Warren buy a doctor for Nicole while he, the father-lover of his daughter can retreat into his money. Later, at fifty when due to alcoholism his liver stops functioning, he gets into a religious and resigned mood. He comes to Europe but doesn't want anyone to know about it; however, with the "greatest fervour" he wishes to see his daughter, Nicole. He tells Dick:

> I've been a bad man. You must know how little right I have to see Nicole again, yet a Bigger Man than either of us says to forgive and pity... If I could see Nicole for ten minutes I would go happy out of the world.... Let me tell you my debt to you is so large---"[46]

46. Ibid., p.266.

How large we come to know only in Book III though there are hints and indications right from the beginning to the end. Rosemary comes upon a scene that violet McKisco had encountered earlier and over which her husband and Tommy Barban had a duel:

> Nicole knelt beside the tub swaying sidewise and sidewise. "Its you!" she cried, "---its you come to intrude on the only privacy I have in the world -- with your spread with red blood on it. I'll wear it for you -- I'm not ashamed, though it was such a pity. On All Fools Day we had a party on the Zurichsee, and all the fools were there, and I wanted to come dressed in a spread but they wouldn't let me -- so I sat in the bathroom and they brought me a domino and said wear that. I did. What else could I do? I never expected you to love me -- it was too late -- only don't come in the bathroom, the only place I can go for privacy, dragging spreads with red

> blood on them and asking me to fix them".[47]

At the time, no doubt she had frozen and repeated, "Never mind Daddy" but it was not all that casual.

It is American wealth that vitiates the values of older Europe as of America too. Hardly had the war in Europe come to an end than it was made into a mound of debris by American wealth. American money feeding European greed with its intense mobility and flux of life. In the novel, people are constantly on the move, "promenading insouciantly upon the national prosperity". Fitzgerald depicted his America as going on the "greatest gaudiest spree in history... its splendid generosities, its outrageous corruptions and the tortuous death struggle of the old America .... [all] had a touch of disaster in them".[48]

Nicole's adulterous liaison in the hotel with Tommy Barban, that liberates her from Dick, recalls scenes and images that pertain to gross materiality and power of corruption lurking underneath the decay and death of unfulfilled promise, the haunting American sounds that herald Nicole's emergence into

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47. Ibid., p.174.

48. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Early Success", The Crack-Up, p.87.

the new world of hot cat life; the air seems rent with a cacophony of turmoil and confusion, the result of elemental abusive noises of violent squabbles. Nicole whose voice was full of money stood stripped of the golden glitter of golden girls and appeared a whore. While she is inside with Tommy Barban in a room "almost ascetic, almost clean.... simplest of places", sailors and whores are outside; their moral identity of sexual laxity and fornication has no difference but for the kind of noises that proclaimed their appearances, the national heritage of predacious wealth of Dan Codys, Buchanans, Demains, Warrens is unmistaken:

> One of the girls hoisted her skirt suddenly, pulled and ripped at her pink step-ins, and tore them to a sizeable flag; then screaming "Ben! Ben!" she waved it wildly. As Tommy and Nicole left the room it fluttered against the blue sky. Oh, say can you see the tender color of remembered flesh? -- While at the stern of the battleship rose in rivalry the star spangled Banner.[49]

It is the whorish betrayal of the promise of the American dream. Wealth, leisure, restlessness, all lead to different

49. Tender Is The Night, pp.315-16.

experiments in pleasure, be it incest, homosexuality lesbianism. Towards the end Mary Minghetti and Lady Caroline were in custody for a serious offence; the latter explains:

> It was merely a lark.... We were pretending to be sailors on leave and we picked up two silly girls".[50]

Everyone was greatly embarrassed, and Gausse sighed forth:

> I have never seen this sort of women. I have known many of the great courtesans of the world, and for them I have much respect often, but women like these women I have never seen before.[51]

In such an ethos, when no relationship is sacred, Nicole hasn't learnt her lesson; when she wasn't safe under her father's roof, could her children be safe in their step father's house? She was too naive and selfish to think of that; she only thought of herself:

> Nicole did not want any vague spiritual romance -- she wanted an "affair"; she

50. Ibid., p.322.

51. Ibid., p.325.

> wanted a change.... All summer she had been stimulated by watching people do exactly what they were tempted to do and pay no penalty for it ..... She began to slight [Dick's] love, so that it seemed to have been tinged with sentimental habit from the first.[52]

In the early part of the novel, Nicole is the representation of the American need for fulfilment which Dick who symbolises the past, archetypal aspect of America, helps to achieve. But it almost seems impossible because the America had been hideously raped and its innocence destroyed by rapacious wealth. Nicole is to be redeemed by Doctor Diver who accepts her for her "hopeful and normally hungry for life" eagerness which seemed rather romantic. The adolescence, youth and excitement are typically American traits whereas the practical maturity adapted to a tired, conventional and limited aspect is the European legacy. Both are part of what constitutes Fitzgerald's evaluation of the deep, unwavering fascination for what elevates and corrupts at the same time i.e. American wealth at the service of realising the American dream.

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52. Ibid., p.310.

America in its youthful expectations, possesses an imaginative daring which a maturer and exhausted Europe fears and squirms about for the latter is the old, grabbing, plundering materialism that has acquired social sanction and respectability, and dreads and envies America for its opulence. Europe puts constraints upon its youth in trying to consolidate the past and its conventional limitations. America is "a willingness of the heart" creative and vibrant with youthful adolescent urges and its vast candid imagination which is incomprehensible disreputable and ugly to the Europeans. America was the land of the hopeful, youthful, innocent past now become subject to irresponsible and irresistible enticements of materialistic possessions and power. However, all this began to have an allurement for Europe that began submerging its quiet, maturer past in the glittering abandon of the "silly, happy age".

Fitzgerald had taken nine years to write Tender Is The Night and had gone to debt to work on it. It was modelled on Vanity Fair and had all that he had gone through "in different layers, like the nine buried cities of Troy". He hoped it would be "good, good, good" but in 1934 that was not how the public reacted. The new fashion was for novels about destitution and revolt, and it dealt with fashionable life in the 1920s; people wanted to forget that they had ever been concerned with frivolities. However, it stayed in

people's mind like a regret or an unanswered question; Ernest Hemingway said, "A strange thing is that in retrospect [it] gets better and better".[53] It has lasting emotion and vitality, and was revised and rearranged to give a better constructed and more effective presentation. Earlier it was not chronological and there was uncertainty of focus. The final version is in five parts or books: Book I, Case History: 1917-1919; Book II, Rosemary's Angle:1919-1925; Book III, Casualties: 1925; Book IV, Escape: 1925-1929; Book V, The Way Home:1929-30. Malcolm Cowley further says that the move is about Dick Diver and it is psychological:

> Its social meanings are obtained by extension or synecdoche. Dick is the part that stands for the whole. He stands for other Americans on the Riviera, he stands for all the smart men who played too close to the line, he even stands for the age that was ending with the Wall street Crash, but first he stands for himself. The other characters are grouped around him in their subordinate roles: Rosemary sets in

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53. Quoted, Malcom Cowley, Introduction to Tender Is The Night, p.xi.

> operation the forces waiting to destroy him, Abe North announces his fate, and Tommy Barban is his stronger and less talented successor. From beginning to end Dick is the centre of the novel.[54]

Fitzgerald himself had drawn up a plan for the novel:

> A natural idealist, a spoiled priest, giving in for various reasons to the ideas of the haute bourgeois, and in his rise to the top of the social world losing his idealism, his talent and turning to drink and dissipation. Background one in which the leisure class is at their truly most brilliant and glamorous...."[55]

Dick goes from "obscurity to obscurity", but the reason for that decline is not clearly stated: was it the standards of the leisure class that had corrupted him or the strain of curing a psychotic wife who gains strength as he loses it by a mysterious transfer of vitality, or a form of emotional exhaustion "like a man overdrawing at his bank" or even

54. Ibid., p.xv.

55. Ibid., p.xvi.

something far back in his childhood. What ever, it may be we see him at the end swaying a little as he stands on a high terrace and makes a papal cross over the beach that he had found and peopled and that has now rejected him, his fate is accomplished and the circle closed. At such a point in his life the stanza from Keats' "Ode To A Nightingale" which prefaces the novel becomes an apposite summation:

> Already with thee! tender is the night,
>
> .....
>
> But here there is no light,
> Save what from heaven is with breezes
> blown
> Through verdurous glooms and
> winding mossy ways.

CHAPTER VI

THE END OF THE DREAM

For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
(John Milton)

CHAPTER VI

The End of the Dream

The Last Tycoon is the most objective and intense statement in terms of Fitzgerald's art. It transcends the concerns of his earlier novels, personal and social documentation. He had relegated all other considerations to the dump-heap, and was now writing as a creative artist. The past had receded into the process of his impersonal history, and into experiences that had become irrelevant in the present context, distorted beyond proportion where sanity and wisdom became poignant remainders of a bygone era. However, from the distance of years, the undimmed past made him more aware of the mistakes, and what he had failed to attain. This made him cling to nostalgia, and he became more unrelenting in giving up the values he had imbibed and which had become the bedrock of his literary beliefs. He lamented to his daughter, Scottie:

> When I was your age I lived with a great dream. The dream grew and I learned how to speak of it and make people listen. Then the dream divided one day when I decided to marry your mother... But I was a man divided --- she wanted me to

> work too much for her and not enough for my dream .... you don't realise that what I am doing here is the last effort of a man who once did something finer and better.[1]

Apparently, Fitzgerald's most desperate obsession during his Hollywood years was to become the responsible serious artist and novelist. Budd Schulesberg's novel, The Disenchanted (1950) is about Fitzgerald's Hollywood years. Schulesberg contends that due to increasing alcoholism he could not salvage his artistic talent and be more of an artist; he uses the Darmouth fiasco of 1938 to justify his claims. However, Sheilah Graham in her biography The Beloved Infidel (1958) interprets the same otherwise. Anyway, the efforts he concentrated towards becoming a serious artist and novelist, despite tremendous pressures and circumstantial odds against which he was laboring, were no mean attempts. In sheer agony he often decided to quit for he could not afford to prostitute his great talents for the vague promise of economic security, nor could he barter away his artistic ambition for pecuniary gains that eventually left him as desolate and restless as ever, unable to cope with the dilemma:

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1. The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Andrew Turnbull, pp.47-48.

> Conditions in the industry [Hollywood] somehow propose the paradox: "We brought you here for your own individuality but while you're here we insist that you do everything to conceal it...." I think it would be morally destructive to continue here any longer on the factory workers' basis.[2]

He needed all the ingenuity and invention in order to struggle hard "not to look poor"; it was a professional hazard in Hollywood. He could not succeed even as a hack writer because that required "practised excellence" which he lacked. As his disappointments spiralled and his screen writing career seemed at an end, he paid greater attention to his novel, executing it with great care and artistic skill:

> I think my novel is good. I've written it with difficulty. It is completely upstream in mood and will get a certain amount of abuse but is first hand and I am trying a little harder than I ever have to be exact and honest emotionally. I honestly hoped somebody else would

2. Ibid., p.304.

> write it but nobody seems to be going to.[3]

He was willing to coalesce his artistic intentions with the *changing* perspective of what he thought to be the conflicting distinction between his concept of identity, individual and social, and the immediacy of the impinging reality of the present. In his copy of James Joyce's Dubliners, he had inscribed:

> I am interested in the individual only in his relation to society. We have wandered in imaginary loneliness through imaginary woods for a hundred years --- too long.[4]

Thus the thematic concern of The Last Tycoon would be the dramatisation of what he had so far experienced as a persistent conflict between the ideals that he had cherished and the way they stood in relation to the demands of reality in his immediate present, and it would be the image of Hollywood that would live more intently within him as he became deeply immersed in the turmoils and internecine struggle of the Hollywood tycoons.

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3. Ibid., p.369.

4. Quoted, Robert Sklar, The Last Laocoon, p.331.

The writing of The Last Tycoon was a virtual release from his immediate predicaments. He became engrossed not only in a past beyond recall but more in what it stood for, the "old virtues of work and courage and the old graces of courtesy and politeness" into which he could recoil and seek reassurance when the changing world became too much for him. He lamented more the loss of his old self, the death of his literary reputation; he wrote to Maxwell Perkins in May, 1940, "to die so completely, for did not the American fiction bear my stamp -- in a small way I was an original". However, a new sense of urgency and a lust for life buoyed him up.

> The new Armageddon far from making everything unimportant gives me a certain lust for life again. This is undoubtedly an immature throw-back, but its the truth. The gloom of all causes does not affect it -- I feel a certain rebirth of kinetic impulses -- however misdirected.[5]

Once more the talent that turned The Great Gatsby into a permanent art was reasserting itself:

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5. Letters, p.450.

> I am deep in the novel, living in it, and it makes me happy. It is a constructed novel like Gatsby with passages of poetic prose when it fits the fiction, but no ruminations and side-shows like Tender. Everything must contribute to the dramatic moment.[6]

The art that he was perfecting, ought to well up from within his experience:

> I am digging it out of myself like uranium... It is a novel a la Flaubert without 'ideas', but only people moved singly and in mass through what I hope are authentic moods.[7]

Hollywood is the most alluring golden image that Fitzgerald created and invested "with some human dignity, the pimp and pander aspects" of its world of glamour and gaiety for it provided Fitzgerald with the most perfect symbolic mode of the American capitalist myth. The tycoon as a solitary capitalist figure became crucial to the thematic statement in The Last Tycoon but it was largely a wistfulness for the past -- the bygone world of unmatched grandeur, unequalled

6. Ibid., p.146.

7. Ibid., p.149.

by the strident progress of the present, a simpler and more enduring world, whereas the new Hollywood was one where all hopes and romantic expectations had evaporated. Hollywood symbolically stands at the edge of the old vanished world that survived in the illusions recreated in motion pictures; but it is also an expression of the American experience in its increasing complexity and modes of new life for which the movies provide an appropriate image of materialistic vulgarity.

Perhaps Hollywood was the apt metaphor for American delusions of greatness envisaged in the old concept of the American dream now blurred by the crass material actuality, the widening gap between the old Edenic vision of Golden Age in a Golden Continent and the transcendent conditions essential to fulfill those dreams and hopes. American reality lacks conditions for a positive imaginative fulfilment because the sophisticated world, resplendent with the gorgeous display of wealth and excessive affluence, is not conducive to the idealised world of order, beauty and peace; on the contrary, it is indifferent, if not actively hostile, to the imaginative realisation of the ideal; it is actually opposed to the idealised just as the earlier simple agrarian world was opposed to the present sophisticated superficiality of modern existence. The illusions of an Arcadian world that Hollywood so well created in the motion

pictures is too fragile a veil to cover and barricade the harsh actuality. It symbolises that desire for refuge in illusions to which the American natural environment is so hospitable because it largely remains unravished, wild, unformed, new and "invites us to cross the common sense boundary between art and reality to impose the literary idea upon the world".[8] Such a world of simplicity, innocence, trust, tranquillity and soft glow is what was lost in the march towards progress and what the motion pictures wanted to retrieve.

In his effort to make Hollywood a symbol dramatising potentially tragic events leading to Stahr's final doom and death, Fitzgerald felt almost an urging compulsion toward idealising it not as an intentional falsification of the actual, but what could counteract its crass materialism, its utter sordidness of affairs, its crushing commercialism. To his imagination, it had become an ambivalent symbol of time and eternity, the fallen state and Edenic life and art. He had indeed the art of transforming life into a permanent and artistic form; the feel for Hollywood comes out with that "extraordinary vividness" which is the requisite for richness and fullness of life. It is a symbol of a self-enclosed, self-sustained world, a miniature empire, a microcosm of American history and national identities, a

8. Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden, pp.351-52.

world free from outside unwelcome intrusion, sealed off even from the disturbing human presence, controlled by an isolated genius, an automation sharing power with responsibility. But its own inexorable logic makes it free from all human warmth, all palpable life, even to make it "a cold, frozen world of eternal winter". It is invested with symbolic implications with its primary emphasis on timeliness and relevance notwithstanding a system that is designed to destroy the very determined individualism and personal integrity that one tenaciously holds on to and defends. It became a mature expression of Fitzgerald's perception of the American experience and his increasingly complex attitude toward its relation to American history and national aspirations. It had become the contemporary image of the New World, now more vulgarised and dissolute, with a diminished stature of modern man. But, paradoxically it still had the power of evoking romantic glamour in its history, the illusions which could fill the gap between the old vision of the American dream and the present actuality and what it had cost in the loss of the old heroic vision and all idealism; there was no longer a possibility commensurate with man's "capacity for wonder".

The earliest symbolism of Hollywood as a capitalist myth of success is to be found in the allegorical reverie, "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz". It is a recreation of the

infinite wonder of moneyed splendour of Hollywood motion pictures, what is made possible with an "unlimited amount of money", selfishness and brutality of a pioneering adventurer, Braddock Washington, the epitome of an avaricious and grabbing American tycoon who becomes the prototype of Fitzgerald's later Hollywood caricatures. He represents the extreme absurdity and madness of the American dream of wealth and power; he tried to bribe God with a diamond as big as the Ritz if only He could save him that day. He is a symbol of strident, modern capitalism, the banality and morbid bourgeois vulgarity and despotism of the American myth of success. However, he was disenchanted, and the mature perception cuts across the false charm of tasteless and hollow luxury of wealth that hunted and haunted the mesmerised dreamer.

The pattern repeats itself in the colossal vitality of Gatsby's illusions. Both Jay Gatsby in The Great Gatsby and Monroe Stahr in The Last Tycoon are the true functionaries of the American myth in the service of "a vast, vulgar, meretricious beauty", and its cynical, powerful corruption. They are the last of the breed of men who believe in and practice individualism and unlimited economic freedom. But as "outsiders" they are the trapped and tragic victims of a myth whose sole purpose seemed to be continuing prosperity envisaged as a basic corollary of the American dream. But

like their author, both Gatsby and stahr are morally adrift, knowing the falseness and yet clinging desperately to what they cannot themselves relinquish as something noble and what gives them their social stature, though it sharpens their moral vehemence. In The Last Tycoon Hollywood becomes that last citadel into which converge all hopes and dreams, desires and fulfilment, and what gives shape and purpose to American ambitions and the characteristic elements of its society. As Michael Millgate aptly observed:

> Part of Fitzgerald's distinction as a social novelist derives from his perception that by presenting an "epic hero" whose business acumen, exceptional as it is, forms only one aspect of his total personality; he could at once increase the stature of the hero and decrease the importance of business, herein lies the special interest of Jay Gatsby and Monroe Stahr.[9]

The dream constitutes what the business tycoon aspires for, a combination of hope for wealth and the adjuncts of

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9. Michael Millgate, American Social Fiction: James to Cozzens, p.107.

youthful innocence, beauty and romance. For Gatsby they are embodied in the person of Daisy without whom life is material without being real. In The Last Tycoon Hollywood is a symbol of Stahr's empire, the "green light" of intense hope. The way to wealth is the dedicated path their destinies must follow. But it is equally their ironic destiny that in trying to redeem the promise they, as pathetic victims, are helpless "pioneer debauchees" of the dream; the grotesque shift of fortune makes them innocent pursuers of corrupted wealth, beauty and romance. The golden dream is tainted and slurred; Hollywood has eluded her. Besides, Stahr provides an insight into whatever justification was to be contrived for the moral survival of Hollywood. Budd Schulesberg who had been reared and nurtured in Hollywood, and had occasion to observe the social scene from close quarters wrote a bitter satire about it, "What Makes Sammy Run" (1940); Nathaniel West portrayed Hollywood as a moral and spiritual wasteland in his novel, The Day of the Locust (1939); but even though The Last Tycoon is a fragment it is nearer to the moral centre of the Hollywood dilemma than either of the above mentioned novels.

To Fitzgerald's mind Hollywood had become symbolically associated with the unfulfilled dreams, desires and the possibility of their ever being attained. This must have been the imaginative appeal of Hollywood that gripped him

powerfully in his idealistic moments for Hollywood was the only dream of America left to the seeker and what was found framed in Stahr's projection room where "Dreams hung in fragments at the far end of the room, suffered analysis, passed -- to be dreamed or else discarded". The American dream had become solidified in the glitter and glamour of golden Hollywood -- and the motion pictures had attained that golden moment which Fitzgerald had always evoked in his art. Hollywood would manufacture dreams where American hopes had been lost. Hollywood movies were more than art and entertainment; they revived a new capacity for hope, dream and illusion, a meeting, point for the American past a metastasis of American culture, a moulder of American identities and national destinies. This historical perspective comes out in a wider cultural and social context in Monroe Stahr than in Dick Diver who rendered it falteringly.

It was in this sense of national history and American destinies that The Last Tycoon was an artistic construct recapturing The Great Gatsby. Even in that Hollywood atmosphere of newness -- new connections and contacts, new illusions, freshness and cold beauty -- there is the longing, a search for the warmth and burning glow of the past, of the "mining town in lotus land" which is the new world of Hollywood, peopled by those who have come to win

back, to retrieve to give shape and form and a semblance of reality to the American dream. Hollywood, like America itself, hankers for the rootedness and understanding of the past. The references to Andrew Jackson's homestead, the Hermitage near Nashville, the presidential figures of the past, Abraham Lincoln et al, create symbolic associations of a past that Hollywood needs in order to be connected with the authenticity of the American dream. Fitzgerald had linked the figure of Lincoln to "a symbol of the past through the... separate perspectives gradually broadening out to a perception of the essential links between the past and the present"[10] because the Lincoln figure is not simply Hollywood's appropriation of the American past created as a movie entertainment as in the scene where a visiting Dutch nobleman, Prince Agge confronts the remote figure of Lincoln in period costume, but is a typical projection of an urge of Hollywood dreamland to forge an equally valid figure who could approximate itself to the standards and values of the past that American-Hollywood is hankering after. The symbolic value of the Lincoln image in terms of its historical-social significance is the focal point of Stahr's tremendous inner conflicts that sum up his aspirations, the goals he cherishes to attain and the reasons of his reaching the pinnacle of Hollywood hierarchy that Boxley, the English screen-writer understands:

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10. Robert Sklar, The Last Laocoon, pp.335-36.

> He had been reading Lord Charnwood and he recognised that Stahr like Lincoln was a leader carrying on a long war on many fronts; almost single-handed he had moved pictures sharply forward through a decade to a point where the content of 'A' productions was wider and richer than that of the stage. Stahr was an artist only, as Mr. Lincoln was a general, perforce and as a layman.[11]

Stahr's own sense of values and aspirations make his reaching after the connections with the past a more appropriate and valid reason which gives Hollywood its significant purpose of the American national destiny which is simultaneously grasped and mocked.

Stahr is primarily an artist; tremendous verve and action are necessary to demonstrate the effectiveness of his skill with an unequalled drive and initiative. He convincingly argues with Boxley why movie is an art form. Though Boxley has been rather skeptical of what is essentially an entertainment medium and what could be turned into an authentic experience from Stahr's own limited capabilities

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11. The Last Tycoon, p.106.

and talents for it, Stahr eventually wins him over without losing much time:

> "Suppose you're in your office. You've been fighting duels or writing all day and you're tired to fight or write any more. You're staring -- dull, like we all get sometimes. A pretty stenographer that you've seen before comes into the room and you watch her idly --. She doesn't see you though you're very close to her. She takes off her black gloves.... [goes] to the stove, opens it and puts them inside. There is one match in the match box and she starts to light it kneeling by the stove. You notice that theres a stiff wind blowing in the window -- but just then your telephone rings. The girl picks it up, says hello -- listens -- and says deliberately into the phone, 'I've never owned a pair of black gloves in my life. She hangs up, and just as she lights the match, you glance around very suddenly and see that theres another man in the office, watching

> every move the girl makes.... Nobody has moved violently or talked cheap dialogue or had any facial expression at all". "What the hell do you pay me for"? demanded [Boxley]. "I don't understand the damn stuff".[12]

What Stahr effectively dramatises is the quality of a character in action which aptly makes explicit the action manifesting character, absolutely an artistic effort and achievement. It is always a subtle imperceptible sense of the dramatic that controls and propels Stahr's actions. He shares with other Fitzgerald characters a passion for willful action like that of Gatsby and Dick, as well as their restless and insuperable intelligent imagination. Stahr as a character with the gift of a heroic, romantic imagination and his developed intellectual powers is able to shape and chisel his own artistic talents. He is free from the shackles and constraints of a limited inhibiting and subduing intelligence. He is the epitome of what Fitzgerald evolved into progressively from Amory Blaine through Anthony Patch to Jay Gatsby and then Dick Diver, and he possesses "both an interesting temperament and an artistic conscience besides a romantic heroic predisposition and a versatile imagination". In the earlier novels, the Fitzgerald heroes

12. Ibid., p.32-33.

are imaginatively creative men who are able to contrive social settings in almost uniquely individualistic ways: Gatsby's orgiastic parties in his Long Island house which helped to bring together and regenerate a body of men and women long sunk in the stupor of changeless insignificance; Dick Diver's beach which he discovered and made to the extent of inhabiting it with individuals he helps to revive like a priest offering comfort and compassion to his congregation; however, both are victims of their overpowering circumstances and pathetic lack of self-understanding; their perennial quests thus end in ubiquitous failure. Monroe Stahr reflects a change. he is more coherent and committed to the special gifts of artistic talents and intellectual suavity that he brings to his authority and power in his spiralling career as a producer -- director of Hollywood. As a creative artist and a powerful movie tycoon, he owes his status and rise to absolute authority and his role as a coordinator of all the diverse agencies needed for a collaborative venture. His practical wisdom and leadership provide Hollywood with a grand medium of mass entertainment in the motion picture industry, the most ambitious that history has known.

His extraordinary aspirations were beyond the capacity of what his past could have given him. Yet the American past of Lincoln and Andrew Jackson and what constituted the old

values of courage, loyalty and honour was all an aspect of the "imaginary past" enshrined in the symbolic image of Lincoln and the myth he gave shape to, and what added a new lease of life to American aspirations in the enlarged scope of the American dream. This sense of an unfulfilled historical destiny linked all the past aspirations to a future dream. Stahr encompasses the breath and vision of that past in his own aspirations and his symbolic climb to the heights sums up the lure of ambition and its fulfilment. Even Wylie White so callously indifferent and cynically innocent of the possibilities of the dream, is apparently touched:

> He felt a great purposefulness. The mixture of commonsense, wise sensibility, theatrical ingenuity, and a certain half-naive conception of the common weal which Stahr had just stated aloud, inspired him to do his part, to get his block of stone in place, even if the effort were foredoomed, the result as dull as a pyramid.[13]

These are the heroic qualities that Stahr arrogated to himself. In turn they added a dimension of romantic lustre

13. Ibid., p.43.

to his concept as a man of destiny. Stahr is the modern hero who successfully evades being defeated by the forces, social and economic, over which he lost control; even though he is broken by them he remains unvanquished. It was the essential characteristic of his participation in the movements of history, the continuing flow of American aspirations that Stahr is identified with, and is the appropriate symbol of. What eventually leads to his submergence into the vast currents of social destiny is what has veered away from the established forms of social values and strains of economic struggle in an earlier age, to a more flexible and fluid order of things in the post war American decades of change and instability. It is typical of the Fitzgerald heroes that they subscribe to the old conservative aristocratic virtues of the older, saner America, and save themselves from being corrupted by the very values that protected the plutocrats, men who possessed the power of wealth. His men are certainly "visionaries of a moral order that the American past made available to them". They are manifest symbols of their nation's destiny in the dignity and magnanimity with which they confront the tragic pathos of individual lives. They have that imaginative daring and audacity to create formidable visions of bliss and felicity in their particular social environment which is the special charm of their heroic actions. If they are disillusioned and fail, it is largely the predicament of the entire social order which

failed to sustain them even though it provided the very ingredients to their audacious imagination and tragic fate. It is the moral grandeur of their lives which is the very essence dramatised in the conflict between their self and society, and which they seek to redeem.

The new conception of the tragic hero for The Last Tycoon came in the new, charming, captivating image of Irving Thalberg that Fitzgerald wrote about to Kenneth Littauer:

> Thalberg has always fascinated me. His peculiar charm, his extraordinary good looks, his beautiful success, the tragic end of his great adventure. The events I have built around him are fiction, but all of them are things which might very well have happened, and I am pretty sure that I saw deep enough into the character of the man so that his reactions are authentically what they would have been in life. So much so that he may be recognised -- but it will also be recognised that no single fact is actually true. I've long chosen him for a hero [among] half a dozen men I have known who were built on a grand scale.

> Certainly, if Zeigfeld could be made into an epic figure then what about Thalberg who was literally everything that Zeigfeld wasn't".[14]

Monroe Stahr was closely modelled on the dazzling impression that Thalberg had created in Fitzgerald's imagination; he turned him into a tragic figure even when Thalberg's life was pathetic rather than tragic because he believed that tragic, doomed and heroic things do happen in Hollywood, Stahr will share Thalberg's hypochondria, his ruthlessness and impatience with mediocrity, his inability to take things easy, to live life at a higher pace than normal, and to have the same kind of bourgeois artistic taste. But Monroe Stahr in his humble, impoverished beginnings is also a continuation of what he had dealt with in The Great Gatsby, the Lincoln-Alger myth of from rags to riches; this legend and the need for a messiah figure coalesce in Fitzgerald's quest for a superman -- hero in the Nietzschian manner to save mankind from the holocaust of impending doom that the Second World War symbolised in the possible death of human civilization. However, Stahr succeeded only in being a tragic, heroic symbol of that myth.

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14. Quoted, Henry Dan Piper, F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Critical Portrait, pp.265-66.

Stahr's own will and imagination had helped him to become a Prince among entrepreneurs; moreover, he exercises genuine authority in a democratic, social set-up; but this is paternal, of the old capitalistic order, the last fading embers of what once glowed with power now lingering smoulderingly in the Hollywood precincts; it betrays sharp tones of what was once aggressive uncompromising individualism. It is indeed a significant image of American business civilization at a vital juncture of irreversible transformation in its national history.

Stahr represents the tradition of responsibility and power in the American business society becoming increasingly acquisitive because of its supreme accent on material success. A society in a state of perennial fluidity, like the contemporary American business society, cannot but become oblivious to the tradition of responsible power. Stahr, as the last tycoon, the tradition of dominant American barons, rules over a vast and complex empire with his dedicated will and intelligence, to make the powerful and popular motion-picture industry a medium for art form. But he succeeds only as "a symbol for vanishing American grandeur of character and role". His inevitable tragic isolation followed closely by his doom and death, is largely a matter of the symbolic end of a long-drawn losing battle of American pioneering aspirations. It means the end of an

era, end of an ideal and a dream. Stahr's struggles against the powerful interests in the Hollywood movie industry -- the banalities of big money, Communist gangsterism, and whatever there is that went against the grain of powerful and responsible individualism, are his symbolic fight against his unwillingness to compromise his artistic sensibility to the demands of an unscrupulous, insensitive and ruthless enterprise. He cannot relinquish his ethical responsibility and commitment to art at the expense of greed for money because by established conventions in Hollywood's economic democracy and the world of professional entertainment, the primary objective is greater profitability as a commercial proposition, the artistic permutations being only adjuncts to sustaining that objective, and subordinating all ethical considerations to enhancing of material wealth.[15]

In a paradoxical sense, Stahr embodies the spirit of anarchy against all bourgeois pretension of Hollywood, and for that reason, he turns into a professional cynic of the American dream. In that Hollywood realm of make-belief and masquerades, the unreal floating world, where highest artistic achievement was a taboo, where professional competence had to yield to modifications of uniformity,

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15. Dan Jacobson, "F. Scott Fitzgerald", Encounter, Vol.XIV, No.6, p.74.

Stahr's individualism, his sensitive temperament and delicate sensibility for artistic perception fell victim to an avaricious monolithic order. His individual propensities became evils that needed exoneration. A business tycoon like Stahr could not go against the tenets of his professional faith and ethics of the business world. His veering away from that ethical -economic order cost him his professional and social success for he failed to live up to the expectations in conformity with the demands that the Hollywood community put upon him, that is the fulfilment of goals through exploitation of commercial opportunity. The deviations from such well-established time-bound conventions provoked against Stahr the ire and hostility of the entire Hollywood monolithism. The well entrenched democratic politico-economic system recoiled only to unleash its pent-up energies to punish and destroy its recalcitrant tycoon. It is indeed in this incontrovertible level of personal charms and successes so ascendent in an era of individual competitiveness and in a society where the dominant moral ideas derive their nature from the ideal aspects of the economy that Monroe Stahr had hinged his fate to in Hollywood. His preoccupation with the pursuits of money, beauty, aesthetic pleasures, and innocuous maneuvering for the one particular direction, people's own good, became manifest in his re-creation of illusions in motion pictures. But the businessman and the artist are apparently,

antithetical figures; Stahr should fail as an artist where he succeeds as a businessman; the two could not be welded much as the socially crass personality, in a basically snobbish democracy, could not preserve the aura of its sacred image. Hollywood had completely merged itself with American national aspirations and historical identities. This insight into social depths of Hollywood community and movie industry delineated in the tycoon -artist figure of Monroe Stahr is nothing short of an exploitative use of the Hollywood myth. But Stahr could contain within himself the two worlds of business and art whose interaction seemed neither meaningful nor creditable pursuit in the realm of American historical yearnings and aspirations. Dick Diver too had failed to be a psychiatrist-socialite but for all the inflated contours of Stahr's portrait, he remains the only real aristocrat among the Fitzgerald heroes and is the closest Fitzgerald ever came to making an adult embodiment of what he hoped or desired for himself and his society. Stahr's life in the studio, projection room, story conferences of screen writers and all that completes the stereotypes, shows the kind of man he is, a typical Hollywood tycoon, hardworking, intelligent, determined, callous overbearing and difficult. However, he is untypical also in many ways.

The screenwriters story conferences are the most effectively presented scenes. It was Fitzgerald's own experience as a writer for the screen that gave him a close view of this aspect of the movie making process. It was one of the crucial moments in his Hollywood experience that made him realise why creative impulse was at a discount in the movie stories. It was certainly what a hack writer could do better than a novelist with a gifted sensibility; however, the movie was a better artistic medium than the novel. William Faulkner put this succinctly, reviewing his own experience as a screenwriter:

> A few years ago I was taken on as a script writer at a Hollywood studio. At once I began to bear the man in charge talking of "angles", story "angles", and then I realised that they were not even interested in truth, the old universal truths of the human heart without which any story is ephemeral -- the universal truths of love and honour and pride and pity and compassion and sacrifice.[16]

A creative writer and artist has his individuality and independence; he cannot be a flattering, fawning underling.

16. Quoted, Joseph Blotner, Faulkner: A Biography, p.1357.

The notion that Stahr as a producer-genius has an answer for everything is the typical idea of the Hollywood script conference for there is something like the Hollywood premise and everyone must fall in with it. The screen writers such as George Boxley know what it means to work under Stahr's supervening genius and his absolute mastery of the intricacies of film-making. The conference becomes symbolic of Stahr's public mask, his power and responsibility, his undeviating energies devoted to transforming the motion picture from a pure commercial venture into an artistic product from material satisfaction to aesthetic contentment. But behind that public mask lies the private figure.

The true centre of the novel, as of the hero, Monroe Stahr, is located in the ironic distance between these two positions, the public image and the private man in the sense of his containing within himself, within his unifying imagination, the private agonies and qualms of a tormented soul. The Hollywood motion picture he has made into an American national myth, the subjective and objective, of what we meet and what we intend discovering, the psychic wholeness, the forces that make for this totality, the man whose life and works are empires and private worlds:

> an all fireworks illumination of the intense passion in Stahr's soul, his

> love of life, his love for the great things that he has built out here, his, perhaps not exactly, satisfaction, but his feeling certainly of coming home to an empire of his own -- an empire he has made.[17]

Though he has a feeling of satisfaction, happiness and triumph, there is also a "feeling of sadness with all acts of courage", perhaps because it is the end of the road with no more worlds to conquer. But Stahr is completely engrossed in the multitudinous practicalities of his world, restless, with a talent to drown his self and his personal predilection in work for he is a fighter and cannot hope to rest on his laurels. A glimpse of him functioning as a producer, managing his empire, moving from problem to problem with "a certain rebirth of vitality with each change" shows he is driven by a mysterious force that maintains his maddening pace till the "poison of exhaustion" sets in. But such an intrusion hardly penetrates the inner core of his private reality, much less uncovers the essential truth about him, for his professional stature as a producer insulates him against the life of the Hollywood community.

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17. The Last Tycoon, Notes, p.135.

The characters who figure prominently in the script conferences, Wylie White, Jane Maloney, John Broaca, Reinmund, George Boxley, and others who collaborate in movie - making, seemed "mental cadavers", the merchandise that Stahr would like to buy for what they have in their minds. He is paternalistic and admits:

> "I never thought ....that I had more brains than a writer has. But I always thought that his brains belonged to me - - because I knew how to use them. Like the Romans --I've heard that they never invented things but they knew what to do with them".[18]

He knows precisely where in the hierarchy of movie making each one stands and what it costs to employ those who can fit in the allotted assignment; he tells Wylie White:

> It takes more than brains. You writers and artists poop out and get all mixed up and somebody has to come in and straighten you out....You seem to take things so personally, hating people and worshipping them -- always thinking

18. The Last Tycoon, p.125.

> people are so important -- especially yourself. You just ask to be kicked around. I like people and I like them to like me, but I wear my heart where God put it--- on the inside".[19]

His dedication is to his self-made empire, his motion picture industry. He wants that impersonal devotion and loyalty from everyone involved in the venture without which true art cannot be created. Being an artist, he demands an artist's undivided devotion to the exclusion of human considerations. His thinking is that of a typical business tycoon, to achieve the goals once fixed with no care for human or material costs:

> That was one thing about Stahr -- the literal sky was the limit. He had worked with Jews too long to believe legends that they were small with money.[20]

He had long moved with moneyed men like Old Marcus and Mort Fleishacker who control and finance the big movie projects which are in awe of them. He himself "had been a money man among money men"; he was the "wonder boy" and the financial

19. Ibid., p.17.

20. Ibid., p.42.

wizard but with his maturing years, he had "grown away from that particular gift". Directors like Brady are susceptible to considerations extraneous to artistic excellence such as social and economic expediency.

Brimmer is the symbol of the Leviathan power of the labour unions and what motivates their functional efficiency. Stahr's waning vitality and physical resources lack the power to resist the growing tide of materialistic, exploiting onslaught on the creative and the artistic. But he is not completely anomalous in an age of industrial combines and capitalist oriented large profit-making organisations such as the movie studios. He represents the old-world paternalistic relationship between employer and employee when individual craftsmanship counted for what began as a self-sufficient, self-propelling profiteering institution was once the vision and enterprise of a single individual, his shadow and shaping power. He is now subsumed under the very organisation that he helped to build and nurture. It was his survival that faced annihilation and he struggled to clinch victory over the destructive forces piling against him. But he can fight only a losing battle against the monolithic empire; his puny strength is unequal to its mammoth power. What he symbolises in his struggle is the typical American dilemma of a super-organisation man; he has lost the battle in his own self; he has no fight left in

him to encounter the forces that undermine his power to cling to authority even when it is completely eroded by his own inability and tired will to ransom the last vestige of his outmoded heroism. His age would reiterate the tragic dilemma faced by him; he remains heroic till the end, the last tycoon; the irony of that epithet sums up his symbolic significance as the last post of a collapsing system. Brimmer fears his heroic figure which can inspire confidence and make capitalism attractive to the masses.

The essential tragic irony of Stahr's destiny is his selfless caring for everybody, and caring too much; this is the doom that overtakes him as Wylie White comprehends. But in this ultimate representative role the American entrepreneur, Stahr becomes the moral symbol for the entire Hollywood community, the glittering Babylon of the West, the most romantic and glamorous city in the world. It destroys him as it has undone so many, yet it continues to fascinate and allure.

This moral point of view in the novel needed a distant objective perspective that the narrator-commentator Cecilia, with her background and heritage, could adequately provide. She exercises an honest, evaluative judgement to bring to the highly inflated picture of Hollywood a point of view

both involved and distant. She wishes to understand the moral enigma of Monroe Stahr.

The affair of Stahr and Kathleen, the emotional centre of the novel, is rather blurred, patchy and out of focus; its implications uncomprehendingly dim. May be she was to symbolise the restorative powers of love that he would lose as a result of his energies being completely absorbed in his career. He has a choice to opt out of his doomed fate into the love of Kathleen, leaving his care and career behind but temperamentally, and, perhaps burdened with a stricken conscience, he cannot abandon himself to a life of unshared responsibilities:

> Stahr is overworked and deathly tired ruling with a radiance that is almost moribund in its phosphorescence. He has been warned that his health is undermined; being afraid of nothing, the warning is unheeded. He has had everything in life except the privilege of giving himself unselfishly to another human being.[21]

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21. Ibid., p.139.

But Kathleen's romantic possibilities and what she could do to wean away Stahr from his strenuous task remains mysteriously unfulfilled. However, what eventually comes out of their relationship has a much larger and deeper significance for him than given in the novel. Inevitably, her glamour wears out, and marrying her would be against the logic of his life; the dilemma of his passionate involvement remains unsolved. May be it was Fitzgerald's personal involvement with Sheilah Graham, who was the model for the fading apparition of Kathleen Moore, that could not be crystalised into moments of deep and lasting passion. His death came in the way of his passionate ecstasy as it deprived Stahr and Kathleen, quivering on the heights of tragic grandeur. It would have been of moment to Fitzgerald had he lived to experience life at its consummating intensity, as it would have been for Stahr to know what his love for Kathleen would mean, the frozen moments in a changing life, the centre of stillness surrounded by silence, and the motion of the turning world. He was recreating a world that Scottie would remember and understand:

> I think when you read this book, which will encompass the time when you knew me as an adult, you will understand how intensively I knew your world.... I am

> not a great man, but sometimes I think the impersonal and objective quality of my talent and the sacrifices of it, in pieces, to preserve its essential value, has some sort of epic grandeur.[22]

As the most perfectly realised tragic character, Stahr is the most significant fictional hero of Fitzgerald. His tragic dimensions are deeper and intenser than Gatsby who is a mere projection of the narrator, Nick Carraways's tragic sensibility; or even of Dick Diver whose heroism is largely on the external plain; Stahr is tragic simultaneously from within and without; what enhances the tragic import of his struggles is the nobility and grandeur of his dream.

Fitzgerald achieves that near perfect feeling for experience the very quality of that experience in its common place ordinary vulgarity and a pervasive sense of evil. This was the meaning and relevance of Hollywood. The mature perception that he brings to an understanding of it is fully realised in the scene when Stahr first sees the figure of his dead wife, Minna Davis in the face of one of the women adrift on Siva's head on the flood waters after the earthquake:

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22. Letters, p.77.

> On top of a huge head of Goddess Siva, two women were floating down the current of an impromptu river. The idol has come unloosed from a set of Burma and it meandered earnestly on its way, stopping sometimes to waddle and bump in the shadows with the other debris of the tide. The two refugees had found sanctuary along a scroll of curls on its bald forehead and seemed at first glance to be sightseers on an interesting bus-ride through the scene of the flood.[23]

In one of the faces, "looking a little scared but brightening at the prospect of rescue" Stahr sees a past drifting in upon him unaware and unsolicited:

> Smiling faintly at him from not four feet away was the face of his dead wife, identical even to the expression. Across the four feet of moonlight, the eye he knew looked back at him, a curl blew a little on the familiar forehead; the smile lingered, changed a little according to pattern; the lips parted --

23. The Last Tycoon, p.25.

> the same. An awful fear went over him, and he wanted to cry aloud. Back from the sour room the muffled glide of the limousine hearse, the falling concealing flowers, from out there in the dark--here now warm and glowing.[24]

The Minna Davis -- Kathleen Moore image that flitted through Stahr's mind brought in a surge of memories. Such a particularisation of experience that smoothly glides through our imagination without the tangible material being forced upon us is a truly artistic achievement. Such a "wholly convincing representation of a world in The Last Tycoon is an image of an experience, and the most vital aspect of that image is the quality of experience it conveys".[25] Fitzgerald creates a world which gives the impression of floating unreality filled with the ghostly echoes and what symbolises the condition that man faces in his half-finished worlds. He is constrained to portray the very queerness of ordinary experience present throughout in the novel because it is the inherent condition of life, moreso in the crass materiality of the Hollywood world. This is the vision that the book communicates, the vision of an externally

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24. Ibid., p.26.

25. Arthur Mizener, The Sense of Life in The Modern Novel, p.195.

glamorous, glittering world enforced upon our imagination with such concentrated images of confluence of those poignant moments when past and present commingle as the one inseparable moment beyond time. But the illusion is dispelled once the telephonic conversation gives out what the voice knows of Stahr that he was the husband of Minna Davis. Stahr wonders if it was not all a trick, something well-rehearsed having appearance of reality on the screen, Stahr was perturbed:

> As the whole vision of last night came back to him -- the very skin with that peculiar radiance as if phosphorous had touched it -- he thought whether it might not be a trick to reach him from somewhere. Not Minna and yet Minna. The curtains blew suddenly into the room, the papers whispered on his desk, and his heart cringed faintly at the intense reality of the day outside his window. If he could go out now this way, what would happen if he saw her again -- the starry veiled expression, the mouth strongly formed for poor brave human laughter.[26]

26. The Last Tycoon, p.59.

But the transience of the dream is part of that floating, incomplete world that Stahr is soon to discover in the "new little house" when through the wedge of light as the door opens he sees Kathleen for the first time:

> There she was -- face and form and smile against the light from inside. It was Minna's face -- the skin with its peculiar radiance as if phosphorous had touched it, the mouth with its warm line that never counted costs -- and over the hunting jollity that had fascinated a generation.[27]

The vision that illuminates Stahr's past is symbolic of the missed moments and irresponsible trust in the quality of mind that was at last to betray him. He had learned to rely on his intelligence, his ferocious capacity for work, his determination and will to overcome emotional barriers. But Kathleen's spell seemed to have robbed him of his former strength; he could no longer contain himself.

The consummation of their love is the most poignant moment that comes out in that scene which is the novel's sustained awareness of an ordinary common place experience for it is a

27. Ibid., p.64.

world which is afloat and mobile on the thin vastness of everything around. "It is an unstable world, constantly drifting, moving fumblingly towards nowhere in particular, but inevitably slipping into moments of wasted ecstasy.

> As the inch between them melted in darkness... she waited in his arms, moving her head a little from side to side... never taking her eyes from him... Then with her knees she struggled out of something, still standing up and holding him with one arm, and kicked it off beside the coat. He was not trembling now and he held her again, as they knelt down together and slid to the raincoat on the floor.[28]

While lying in the darkness Kathleen thought irrationally of the "bright indefatigable baby", she might have as the continuing possession of Stahr. But she is not capable of much tenderness; she will leave him to be married even before he can propose; he comes to know of her proposed marriage through a letter she had been trying to conceal.

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28. Ibid., p.87.

The half-finished house that Stahr is building at Malibu where he and Kathleen consummate their love lies strewn with "concrete mixer, raw yellow, wood, and builders' rubble.... an open wound in the seascape, [waiting] for Sunday to be over". The house has been given the semblance of reality in readiness for a premature luncheon. Just as the house looks real inspite of its unreality, in the same manner, in its symbolic insubstantiality Kathleen feels that Stahr loves her not for herself but for the shadow and apparition of his dead wife that she resembles.

> The other woman was more missed in her absence. They were alone and on too slim a basis for what had passed already. They existed nowhere. His world seemed faraway -- she had no world at all except the idol's head, the half-open door.[29]

Kathleen has made the dormant image of Minna more palpable and vibrant with "her glowing beauty and unexplored novelty" that pressed against Stahr bringing back the old hurt once more though with a heaviness, welcome and delightful for she does "look more like she actually looked than how she was on the screen". To make it seem more real she for once would

29. Ibid., p.65.

like to have a familiar housewife appearance, to feel married to him, "She stared around critically. 'Of course we've just moved in', she said, '-- and theres a sort of echo'."[30] It is a world which creates the unreality of half-finished worlds, the impressions of unreality in a floating world filled with ghostly echoes, what symbolises a larger sense of human destiny.

Kathleen's fragile world of happiness is romantic and illusory, still unhindered by unhappy intrusions of despairing destructions of death. Her careful self-conscious evasion of permanence of love that she could have sought in Stahr's world shows her sense of insecurity and desirability of escape into illusions. On the contrary, the idea of death (death of Minna incarnated in Kathleen that Stahr loves) is a vital, living, psychological reality for Stahr. His love for Kathleen is a symbol of love with death. This reflects his desire for imaginative possession of what is permanent, not love of Kathleen but Minna in death:

> As he walked toward her, the people shrank back against the walls till they were only murals: The White table lengthened and became an altar where the priestess sat alone. Vitality welled up

30. Ibid., p.89.

> in him, and he could have stood a long time across the table from her, looking and smiling.
>
> When she came close, his several visions of her blurred; she was momentarily unreal... Stahr continued to be dazzled as they danced out along the floor -- to the last edge, where they stepped through a mirror into another dance.[31]

The idea and image of death of Minna that struggles to ensure for itself a permanent existence is an ideal that Stahr carves for himself in the figure of Kathleen. But more significant is the fact of Kathleen being an outsider to Hollywood to which she can never belong. This helps Stahr in his imaginative idealisation of a person and place which acquire attributes of perfect peace, harmony and a happiness which is unadulterated and with the possibility of continuing permanence, free from the impingement of tinsel superficialities of Hollywood culture, for in escaping into Kathleen's love, Stahr is seeking refuge from a complex, artificially cumbersome and sterile confinement of reality that is Hollywood.

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31. Ibid., p.73.

Stahr longs to escape into some great good place which would be a haven of ease and renewal of life, of attenuated time and healing, and a healthy ordered life. In appearance, Hollywood is a place of dream sweetness, of reason and order, and a sensible visible arrangement. But it is only an idealised world of dream-reality of motion pictures. Its dimension of reality is more complex and undefined. It typifies the American innocent expectations for a passionate and vigorous urge for an idealised vision in the face of a more harsher realities that they confront. He must languish in the throes of his loneliness inspite of Kathleen inviting him "to a romantic communion of unbelievable intensity". It is almost a world that crashes for Stahr as Cecilia saw it: When she leaves him:

> It was good dancing now, with plenty of room but it was lonely -- lonelier than before the girl had gone. For me, as well as for Stahr, she took the evening with her, took along the stabbing pain, I had felt -- left the great ballroom empty without emotion.[32]

Kathleen remains an evanescent figure, a Minna dead but with a glowing nimbus, her tangled image floating above the stark

32. Ibid., p.77.

realities of death and evil, and she is the symbolic centre of Stahr's love, his one hope of survival against the poison of exhaustion, doom and death. As his love for her intensifies and as she becomes a more objectified, perfect innocence he becomes increasingly more taut with the possibility of the imminent death of a vision of life. Yet he would like to make redoubled efforts to preserve her ideal world:

> "I'm building a house out here", Stahr said, "much farther on. I don't know why I'm building it".
> "Perhaps its for me", she said.
> "May be it is".
> "I think its splendid of you to build a big house for me without even knowing what I looked like".
> "It isn't too big. And it hasn't any roof. I didn't know what kind of roof you wanted".
> "We don't want a roof. They told me it never rained here. It --- ". She stopped so suddenly that he knew she was reminded of something.
> "Just something thats past",
> she said.

"What was it?" he demanded,
"--- another house without a roof?"
"Yes, another house without a roof".
"Were you happy there?"
"I lived with a man," she
said," A long, long time--
too long...."[33]

The roofless house that Stahr is building is symbolic of his shelterless life, a not-home symbol, uprootedness and non-belonging; the home has vanished with Minna; the not-home feeling has been referred to by Carlos Baker as one "vast circumambient realm of nothingness and night"; all has disappeared into that night that engulfed Minna, the sense of good life, love and happiness, health and well-being, dignity and peace, but there is a very slim glint of hope. Maybe Kathleen is afterall an illusion of a home but she is at best a symbolic abstraction of the idea of love too, a momentary escape from emotional exhaustion, spiritual bankruptcy self, absolute and unrelieved loneliness; its symbolic import is inescapable; it is a perilous and paralysing vision of the times. Yet the necessity to build a house, a home, signifies a literal, spiritual or symbolic human need for companionship, for a sense of togetherness and social cohesion, the death that must shatter the veil of

33. Ibid., p.80.

illusion to usher in a new life, a renewal of vitality, a new urge for living. Kathleen too needs that sense of security that her past has failed to offer. She is eager to see the half-built house, the floating incomplete world that Stahr inhabits. But all round the house she finds builders' rubble, and all around are the feeble hills behind, and "barren glitter" of the scene. It is all symbolic of emotional and spiritual sterility, creative barrenness. But Stahr can arrange a make-shift home feeling for the love they are about to consummate, yet even love is barren and meaningless; he has lost his only chance to be saved, to live with greater vitality, his ability to love, for love is no longer a regenerative force. As the American business, he knows only one love, work; he is married to his work, to his studio; they are his home and wife. Though "the studio is really home":

> he wanted the pattern of his life to be broken. If he was going to die soon, like the two doctors said, he wanted to stop being Stahr for a while and hunt for love like men who had no gifts to give, like young nameless men who looked along the streets in the dark.[34]

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34. Ibid., p.90.

But Kathleen knows better:

> She would not be part of his exultation, for it was defeat. So far it was a defeat. And even she thought that if she stopped it being a defeat, broke off and went inside, it was still not a victory.[35]

She carried as much the burden of the past as Stahr did. They are homeless people, fated to be loners for they have their secrets to be with; they can go nowhere, be nowhere except with their own selves.

The car is a symbol of mobility, and the urge to "jump in the car and drive somewhere" is what can take them away somewhere as if "fleeing from the spot of a crime":

> Then they were in the car going downhill with the breeze cool in their faces, and she came slowly to herself. Now it was all clear in black and white.[36]

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35. Ibid., p.86.

36. Ibid., p.86.

The car is Fitzgerald's recurring symbol of American loss of identity and placelessness for mobility and constant wheeling around is not what makes for permanence, stillness, calm and restfulness which are afterall static. What connotes home has a vibrant, tangible quality of peace and security found in human contact, love, warmth and a feeling of oneness. Carlos Baker feels that like a roofless house, the car too, a not-home symbol, has an interwoven "tragic pattern of fatigue and suffering, loneliness, defeat and doom"; the car that Stahr and Kathleen ride on their first journey is also roofless. Hollywood itself becomes the broad social reference to their fate for it is the common American predicament that repeats itself in their relationship:

> Sullen cars were leaving the wet beaches and starting back into the city. Further on they ran into the fog -- the road lost its boundaries on either side and the lights of cars coming toward them were stationary until just before they flared past.[37]

The lights too, like cars, are symbols of incomplete, fluid and floating worlds where nothing is static, nothing solidifies into the strong granite of permanent

37. Ibid., p.86.

relationship. The lights too symbolise false glamour, an outward projection of glittering flashes to make up for the inner paucity and lack of love, warmth and human security. Light signifies not simply the rich, blatant arrogance of material possessions as the lights of the "climbing bungalows" but the inner working of passion and the sudden urge to possess lest one might slip:

> Lights were on in the climbing bungalows -- he turned on the headlights of the car. Stahr felt heavy in the pit of his stomach.
> "We'll go out again".[38]

They go, shelterless and unhappy, dreading the chance they might lose forever. They consummate their love for the doubtful moments that bring peace and tranquility, slip into darkness and oblivion, and the despairing moments of separation, doom and death. Thus the house, the car and lights are symbols of betrayal and debauching of the innocent dream. Kathleen would disappear into the "waning night" being at the most "a single thrilling stranger" bound to Stahr by a few slender hours"; she was gone as her letter said, "to be married soon", to another man:

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38. Ibid., p.85.

> The car, the hill, the hat, the music, the letter itself blew off like the scraps of tar paper from the rubble of his house. And Kathleen departed, packing up her remembered gestures, her soft moving head, her eager sturdy body, her bare feet in the wet swirling sand. The skies paled and faded -- The wind and rain turned dreary, washing the silver fish back to the sea.[39]

What had departed with Kathleen was an idea, a moment, and "Minna died again on the first landing, and he forgot her, lingeringly and miserably again, step by step to the top."[40] It was a reversion back to "Minna and death together.... the world in which she looked so alone that he wanted to go with her there."

The letter and telegram are portentous symbols of disaster the harbingers of fate, the lurking ominous agents of evil and destruction like the unsuspecting rain Stahr and Kathleen meet on their journey to Malibu; here too the rain has the same symbolic connotations of disaster as in

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39. Ibid., p.98.

40. Ibid., p.98.

Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms which the foredoomed lovers, Catherine and Fredrick Henry suffer.

Stahr emerges as the most brilliant and convincing portrait of the American businessman - hero. He is typical of his class since perhaps no other businessman in literature has been so highly regarded for his business pursuits. Even when the business of American has been simply business, the mentality that goes into successful enterprise has been subjected to derision and unalloyed ridicule. The babbitry disqualifies him to be taken as a man with creative artistic talents. The fusion of business and art are unthinkable as they have been supposed to be mutually exclusive activities; for the sheer business acumen and abilities, a businessman is regarded unworthy to be "a large-minded, generous, disinterested heroic character". Stahr singularly transcends not only the inherently associated limitations of a businessman, but attains the heroic proportions and aura of doom and tragic grandeur. The spiralling ascent of his career made possible by his inherent talent, skill and imagination is mauled by the overpowering leviathan of the business organisation. He is the victim of his own expansive imagination, caught up in the labyrinth of his complexities and is enmeshed by his own larger successes. His studio is too vast an empire for his ruling. The internecine struggle

for domination because of his weakening hold, results in the divisive and disparate break-up of his movie empire. He is primarily an artist who must revolt against any threat to his artistic, creative pursuits. His imagination cannot regard motion pictures merely as commodities to be traded for commercial profits. Such an attitude goes against the very business ethics of the big financiers whose sole aim of fiscal investments is commercial exploitation of the movies for increased profit, not artistic excellence. It is to prevent such exploitative materialistic motives contaminating a fine medium for artistic delineation of life and human experience that he must pay a price. The exigencies of art demand creative freedom unrestrained by money and its exploitative devices. The struggle between him and Brady symbolises the struggle for a pre-emptive control and domination of the entertainment medium by art and money. He is virtually hemmed in from all sides; the big financiers, labour unions and all such collaborative agencies as engage themselves in the enterprise are out to put impediments in the way of his artistic endeavours. He must inevitably give in to forces that have become too unwieldy for his control. In the successful movie venture the most important functionally situated position is that of the director, who must command the unquestioned obedience and loyalties of all subservient to him in the collaborative venture. Stahr holds that authority, but he must share it

equally with other artistes engaged with him and answerable to him. Inspite of his implicit faith in the efficacy of creative freedom it is ultimately his unifying imagination which holds final responsibility for the resultant artistic product. There is a secret conspiracy to pass this unique authority that Stahr combines and concentrates within himself to lesser but more envious and manipulative directors like Pat Brady whose very incompetence and lack of imagination qualifies them for the status quo of economic profitability for which the big financiers had formed their monopolistic trust.

The Last Tycoon specifically delineates the imperceptible forces in modern American society that covertly support the myth of capitalist success and would find its overt fulfillment in the Hollywood myth Infact a real economic situation is symbolically transposed to Hollywood, lending it the same psychological and symbolic overtones associated with Daisy in The Great Gatsby. Monroe Stahr, in his dreams and aspirations and the hard work he puts into realising them, represents the old Hollywood and the pioneering frontier phase of American history. He repeats the Alger hero's quest with all the central features of the myth, humble beginnings, early poverty, little education, untouched by traditional culture, but gifted with the quality of leadership, a spark of genius, an indomitable

faith, the will and determination to succeed, to be the top man in his field, and he is bound to succeed. He is Theodore Dreiser's Frank Cowperwood who became much more than what he aspired for. Stahr's genius, intelligence and capacity for taking pains have taken him "through trackless waste of perception into fields where very few men were able to follow him". He had the character and ability of a man of action, a capitalist businessman, an empire builder, a "merchant prince":

> He looked spiritual at times, but he was a fighter -- somebody out of his past knew him when he was one of a gang of kids in the Bronx.... He walked always at the head of his gang, this rather frail boy, occasionally throwing a command backward out of the corner of his mouth.[41]

With such a magnificent mind and good luck for a start, Stahr would reach that "extraordinary illuminating flight" which would take him to new heights of power and responsibility. But his artistic ability, compassion and humanity make him an ideal capitalist, a benevolent tycoon. He thus represents the golden age of American capitalism now

41. Ibid., p.15.

about to be over; he is the last tycoon of the great line of paternalistic entrepreneurs. Like others of his class, he had grown up "dead cold", but unlike them he learnt "tolerance, kindness, forbearance and even affection like lessons." He combines in himself idealism and practicality, and has resisted pressures and demands of economic and business considerations, and has taken the movies "way up past the range and power of the theatre." But in his will to crush the power of organised labour, his determination to eliminate industrial paternalism and collusive racketeers it tends to project the unfortunate development where the fate of Stahr, the last tycoon, overshadows Hollywood. His idealism sets in the process of his self-destruction as of Hollywood after him. The pall of decay and ruin hangs over Hollywood, and there is sadness not only for what is overtaking Stahr but an era of American past as the old Hollywood itself dying with him.

Pat Brady and Brimmer are symbols of what will replace Stahr once he disappears from the scene. They are the new breed of men, the destructive tycoons, symbols of materialism and selfishness, and what has perverted the ideals set forth by the breed of believers in the American dream of individualism and economic freedom to make the myth of success a reality. They represent the collective, collusive forces of dehumanised capitalism and organised brutal labour

power. Pat Brady is a composite image of the Wall Street, enormous leviathan, depersonalised concentration of capitalism of the East, corporate capitalism trying to destroy individual enterprise. He amply symbolises the loss of individual entrepreneurial identity. He is the destructive tycoon who belongs to the gangster capitalist of the bootlegging, Prohibition era of the Twenties:

> Money is the evil that defeats them. As soon as they strike rich they begin to behave like idiots and get themselves hopelessly involved.[42]

Brady's loss of identity is so complete that he never confronts directly. He lurks in the background like the impending doom, as Schwartz senses him, and as Cecilia finds out:

> I began to see that his strong will didn't fill him out as a passable man. most of what he accomplished boiled down to shrewd. He had acquired with luck and shrewdness a quarter interest in a booming circus -- together with young

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42. Bosley Crowther, The Screen Review, p.73.

> Stahr. That was his life's effort -- all the rest was an instinct to hang on.[43]

Obviously, he made a fatal slip on the financial tight rope of Hollywood; his impending doom is not too far; even his daughter knows that his rise to power has been pure luck, a chance and trading on other peoples' talents. He has learnt a little about the "feel of America" and has no talent for film making; his luck has been Stahr else he's a mere exploiter and manipulator. Both of them would have, however, struggled and destroyed each other for the control of Hollywood, symbolically a destruction of the American capitalist industry. It was Stahr who was to be defeated, and with him his individualism against the corporate forces of capital and organised labour.

The most significant contrast between Stahr and Brady, as between Gatsby and Tom Buchanan, is in their affair, their approach to sex, the women they love. For Stahr, Kathleen is the symbol of his romantic yearning, whatever the ultimate fate; even here he preserves what is now a dying European and American tradition. On the contrary Brady's materialism and unethical conduct is best illustrated in the episode where Cecilia stumbles on the figure of Birdie Peters in her father's closet. She had gone to him to plead for Martha

43. The Last Tycoon, p.28.

Dodd, Johnny, Swanson, Evelyn Brent and other such "discarded flowers" who had made money for producers and directors at their prime but were only allowed to slip away into misery eked out with extra work. She finds him trembling and his shirt soaked through, and he blames it all on the high-handedness of Stahr who's "in my hair night and day.... I'm half crazy." Hearing a long, low moan from the closet she was first startled, then transfixed and then brave enough to open it only to find:

> Father's secretary, Birdie Peters, tumbled out stark naked -- just like a corpse in the movies...a mistress stuffed naked into a hole in the wall in the midday of a business.[44]

No wonder he kept people like Martha Dodd walking up and down his office, guaranteeing them regular appointment. On the other hand there is Monroe Stahr to whom the handsome actor, Roderiguez comes because he never saw a situation where Stahr didn't know the way out; even if he advised him to commit suicide, he would. His problem is a very personal one, nothing to do with the industry; his film has broken all records, grossed thousands, his fan mail's up but:

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44. Ibid., p.103.

> "I'm through.. I'm washed up... Esther and I sit opposite each other at dinner, and I'm ashamed to look at her. She's been a good sport about it, but I'm ashamed .... I am afraid to go home at night, afraid to go to bed.[45]

He had gone to Pat Brady who had given him a lot of "phoney advice"; he had tried it all but nothing had worked. Monroe spends time with him, tells him what to do, and later he comes to thank him.

Hollywood thus is only a fading reflection of the epic grandeur. It is Fitzgerald's statement of a lost vision of agrarian past supplanted by the gospel of wealth and industrial capitalism. It is the paradox of the age, how to attempt to reconcile the contradictory forces of heroic ideal of individualism with the monster of greed and rapacious urges that must end in exploitation and tyranny. The New World indeed had paid a tremendous price for its reconstruction. Perhaps The Last tycoon could retrieve something:

> I hope it will be something new, arouse new emotions, perhaps even a new way of

45. Ibid., p.35.

> looking at certain phenomena. I have set it safely in a period of five years ago to obtain detachment, but now that Europe is tumbling about our ears this also seems to be for the best. It is an escape into a lavish, romantic past that perhaps will not come again into our time.[46]

In the ultimate sense the tragedy of Monroe Stahr, as of Jay Gatsby, depends as much on the intensity of the hero's hope as on the finality of its disillusionment.

Hollywood movies exercised a curious fascination on Fitzgerald's mind. As an artistic medium, the motion picture had made a new cultural conquest, supplanting old traditional values by investing and merchandising new ideas and attitudes to life, even to the extent of perpetuating its dominion over a large segment of American society. To Fitzgerald, the movies had "a more glittering, a grosser power than had ever before existed to seduce and enslave the mass mind." He intended to explore and portray the motion picture industry as a cultural and social phenomenon, the Hollywood community with its fantastic, glamourous life determining the romantic social aspirations and urges of the

46. Ibid., p.141.

American people. It became a larger than life symbol, a world vaster and grander than the ordinary one, a world of splendorous golden haze. The movies could display wealth and success as a glorious dream, for, in his imagination, they were locked up together, and he saw them as synonymous with his pursuits the one implying the other. Like his extremes of imagined riches, Hollywood too became an emblem of extravagance with its unlimited amount of money to create phantasmagoria of incredible ingenuity of human imagination. But all this dreaming of the "money and glory" was almost inaccessible, beyond the impregnable walls of the Hollywood that he hoped to conquer.

It was this new reality of Hollywood that Fitzgerald tried to capture in The Last Tycoon. Though he took the Hollywood theme with a hesitating uncertainty. Perhaps he knew too much and it was painful to record what he knew as Aldous Huxley points out:

> May be the total reality is always too undignified to be recorded, too senseless or too horrible to be left unfictionalised. All the same it is exasperating if one happens to know the facts, its even rather insulting.[47]

47. Aldous Huxley, The Genius and the Goddess, p.3.

In choosing this most complex of American themes, Fitzgerald was perhaps making a magnificent gesture to repay all that Hollywood had taught him. Even though he had been used cheated, neglected by it, his indebtedness remained.

It is only in its new technique of montage that The Last Tycoon was new and different. It has a new sentiment, the nostalgia of the future, what might be lost, the paralysing fear of what will be gone with the wind. Such was the unintended nostalgia, the intent behind Stahr's actions, his impending failures and defeats, that gave to the novel its new fictional stream. It tried to combine the thrilling, recurring themes of the dream of money, love and the movie stage in the happy alliance and interflow of the novel and the movie joining and altering each other's course.

Hollywood becomes the vantage point of Stahr's artistic observation of society which the movie represents as an articulated experience. It symbolically pertains to a thickening inter-connectedness between the self of Stahr and the social world which he dominates and which provides that privileged moment crucial to his relationship with Kathleen, his most intimate contact with the outside world. But an intenser and more anomalous relationship is between him and the Hollywood community without which the unfolding experience and the meaning would be submerged in irrelevance

and inanity for the novel is primarily a symbolic statement regarding a representative man and a society at a particular point of their disintegration. Stahr's isolation, in perspective, is one which enwraps the fictional totality to unravel the enigma of the American dream and the fading hopes of it ever being realised except in that most dynamic illusion of the American nation, the dreamland of the Hollywood movie world. Fitzgerald had at last found the most cogent and authentic symbol for his final indictment of the American dream and its disillusioning impact; even in its fragmented version the meaning could hardly go unheeded. Besides, it came not a day too soon as America was getting ready to enter what till then (Dec. 1940 when Fitzgerald breathed his last) had been a European war and to experience once more the shattering impact of illusion to end all illusions.

CHAPTER VII

FAIRYLANDS FORLORN

Ah Love! Could thou and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits -- and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire.
(Edward Fitzgerald)

CHAPTER VII

Fairylands Forlorn

Fitzgerald seeks to explore and lay bare the areas of social experience which were of immense interest and concern to his age. He projected his society's principal preoccupations and defined its hopes, aspirations and dreams. Money and material possessions had helped change the fundamental notions of man, his place and predicament in society. As an invasive force, money had stretched its tentacles far and wide, and had gone so far as to affect modes and manners of the epoch, and shape its aesthetic sensibility as also its cultural responses.

The psychological implications of money as the terrifying fiscal strength in the post-war American social and moral ethos, became the most powerful and potent cultural determinant and drew all and sundry into the vortex of a peculiar pursuit, flippancy, flirtation, delectation and dissipation. As an intensely sensitive human barometer, recording social tremors and reflecting changing complexions of contemporary American society, Fitzgerald responded passionately to the spectacle of transformation, revealing life in a rapid Kaleidoscope. As a consequence, he could not remain detached and disengaged from the profound social and cultural concerns of his age. Nor could he afford to be

indifferent to the society which formed the very fountain-spring of his inspiration and the very material of his art with which he wove the delicate fabric of his novels. It is in his symbolism of money that Fitzgerald found a vitally significant and efficacious instrument for guaging as well as reflecting the transfiguration of the American social and cultural life that catalyzed the Twenties in the wake of the unprecedented on-rush of enormous wealth.

It is historically borne out that during this period, money had assumed social and moral dimensions hitherto unheard of and unforeseen. The possession of fabulous wealth, or its absence, marked off and determined socio-ethical values by conferring status, power and prestige, and investing the possessor with a distinctive lustre. This was accomplished by putting special premium on American life of such commitments to old graces and the grandeur of the warm, old vanished world as would lend new complexions of meaning and insight. Jay Gatsby, for instance, contrives his untiring illusions to retrieve that world to make the past repeat itself. But like the America that he symbolises, he succeeds only in being subsumed by the allurements of the corrosive and corrupting wealth. The undiminished moral and spiritual desiccation by immense and easy money is also the meaning of fate in Tender Is The Night and The Last Tycoon: Dick Diver fails to cope with the bewitching enticements of Nicole's

money and is ravished by the Warren wealth which dissipates his healing power that his society needed for its own normalcy and rejuvenation. It is money that cripples Monroe Stahr's talent to create illusions that wealth alone can generate; but he too ends up as its helpless and hapless victim.

Money in its callous enormity became the equivalent, quid proquo, an alternative, replacement, a metaphysical substitute for what were once the cardinal social and moral values -- truth, beauty, goodness -- of the inherited legacy of the aristocracy of wealth and worth, and its attendant privileges and prerequisites. Fitzgerald took upon himself the responsibility of being the national conscience of America, the moral Messiah to recommend a healing balm, a panacea, for the moral and social salvation of a generation deprived of its spiritual moorings, floundering on a rudderless boat, desperate to be rowed to a safe destination, a secure haven for disembarkation. His artistic quest was the spiritual voyage of discovery of an El Dorado of imagination where man's weary soul might find solace and where his frayed nerves might be soothed and assuaged. But his generation, tantalised by the blandishments of wealth, failed to realise that behind the facade of well-contrived social niceties and social charm lay a deeper sharper, and a more penetrating premonition and prophetic vision of what

would overwhelm American hopes and aspirations within those post-war decades. His age, strangely enough, though cajoled and pampered by his golden dreams and illusions, failed to heed the warning voice of its "last Laocoon" that would continue to reverberate through the pages of his novels.

The stark realities of money in the industrial, urban American society entailed gigantic, extended horizons of materialism, resulting in a precarious imbalance of material gains and moral decay. The implications of money had a debilitating and pernicious impact on that society, so much so that it was terrible to contemplate the pervasive corruption and exploitation resultant upon the possession of big money and the trail of evil consequences it left behind in different spheres of life, social, economic, cultural and moral. In The Great Gatsby, gilded corruption hidden in tainted money is given rosy colours to sustain Gatsby's inexhaustible capacity for hope and unwearying illusions; but he survives as the least corruptible in a world of moneyed evil where everyone is defiled, desecrated and blinded by the foul dust that floats about in the ambience of putrefying wealth. In The Beautiful and Damned expectations of excessive wealth lead to abandoning of all responsible conduct and crumbling of moral barriers. What could provide ethical sanctions for Anthony Patch's dereliction of social

propriety is wealth with noblesse oblige and moral accountability.

Money which is so much needed for smooth commerce, almost invariably failed to become an endorsement for personal happiness and social respectability. Instead it succeeded in creating a yawning gap, as it were, between the sharing of multiplying wealth and its extending avenues for consumption, on the one hand, and the ameliorative and beneficent use it could be put to for the moral good of society, on the other. But the accruing advantages of money inescapably leaned towards what depraves and demoralises rather than what is promotive of virtue and excellence. What came as the intervening force in the hiatus was man's lust for domination through possession of mammoth wealth which became a new mode of experiencing and wielding power that money alone could bestow.

The liquid flow of money sought newer and more seductive ways of breeding evil and polluting social climate, even to the extent of entailing ecological imbalances. The big centres of metropolitan commercial culture have been invariably the hotbeds of seething corruption and seduction through wealth. In This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned, it is New York which forms the very source from

which emanates all that is vicious and vile in wealth. The haunts of lustful ventures and carnal orgies and such attendant vices as are nourished and sustained by easy and misbegotten wealth. This urban business would supplant the quieter, idyllic and a more virtuous world of rural innocence, though the metropolitan sophistication would decry such pastoral agrarian backwaters as uncouth remote wilderness, still unaffected by the ever expanding virus of vitiated wealth. In other words, the tainted money served to pander to the baser passions, and set in motion the cycle of moral degeneration, for as is true in most cases, big money is symbolically sex gone wild which no amount of apologies could conceal or explain away.

This is also Fitzgerald's Mid-West which Nick Carraway extols so eloquently in The Great Gatsby and to which all the characters belong. They all go "East" which is the centre of not only immense riches but also of great social prestige and political power, New York once again, the symbolic centre of the American dream of money as the myth of success. But the disillusioning impact of money in the East makes everyone go West to the old, vanishing world where unspoilt virtue lingers still as a graceful way of life. In Tender Is The Night the European Riviera beaches become a substitute for New York in the symbolic role and function they perform; the Americans in Europe with their

new world wealth contaminating the old hierarchy of values still in tact and uncorrupted, though not unresponsive to the new excitements of American wealth.

In The Last Tycoon the area shifts further West to the last post of the resilient American frontier. It is Hollywood, the centre of motion picture industry, the new focus and meteor of the American dream. It is the mythical world in which the legend of fabulous wealth and the illusions it could energise finds its gorgeous echo. The East is now bald and barren. What the East had brutalised and annihilated the pioneering West must materialise and fulfil, the promise and possibility of the dream. In Fitzgerald's imagination the ecological regions pertain to specific areas of experience of American social and psychological reality. Such identifiable moral and spiritual contours of America have found their scathing portrayal through the symbolism of money.

The picture of money that emerges from Fitzgerald's novels has several levels of heights and depths. It serves to point to the index of the class of American rich that the novelist endeavours to fictionalise in terms of ruthless social truth. Such a coherent social order is an essential pre-condition to the character's social habitat in which he is an involved, responsible being, and in which context, all

the aspects of life in the specifics of that society are readjusted and reassessed. What Fitzgerald accomplishes is the meaningful coalescence of the self and society, an extension and elevation of the self on to a higher plane. It is to bring home the relevance that individual characters are shaped by what constitutes an age, the milieu and the moment and that the social mores and manners mould and determine the involutions of the inner life of the characters. In turn, through an inward revelation, the characters unravel the skein of internal disorders and spiritual malaise of that society. This interaction has urged the writer to put his diagnosing finger on the pulse of the age, the very source of its cancerous disease, what contaminates and poisons the stream of life; what defiles and debases individuals promiscuously and ruthlessly.

This was a generation that had gone out of hand. Elders had lost credibility and therefore rather than losing self respect they decided to dance to the tune of their children. Three sets of elders are mentioned in the novels: mothers and fathers -- Amory Blaine's mother who insists on being called Beatrice, Rosalind's mother who encourages her rather than deters her, and Gloria's mother who is exasperated but helpless with her daughter, "a connoisseur of kisses"; Nicole's father who seduced her, Cecilia's father whose naked Secretary tumbles out of the wardrobe in her presence,

Gatsby's father who hopes his son would conquer new worlds; all of them are hardly role models. The second set comprises Anthony's grandfather for whom the grandson has no respect and who rejects his idle ways and disinherits him. The third set has Monsignor Darcy who doesn't reprimand or advise because he knows it would only increase rebelliousness, but his actions speak louder than words so Amory finds a meaning in life by serving others as Monsignor had done.

A greater galaxy of women have been presented in the short stories and their multi-faceted personalities have been highlighted: beloveds, wives, mothers, mistresses and professionals. In the novels they are presented only as beloveds, wives and mistresses. No wonder then that they were lost in the illusion of "young romantic love to which women look forever forward and forever back." In such a world, a wife doesn't want to be called a wife; she prefers "mistress" because the wife is "such an ugly word". Motherhood too was "a crowning indignity". Marriage itself was not very palatable because it was associated with "responsibility and a lot of children", and this was a class that revelled in eat, drink and be merry; they were an "abandoned" set of young men and women. There is no woman that can uplift the men, no woman of character, no professional as we have in the short stories.

Obviously, there's no time for religion. Though Catholicism, Bilphism and even Nirvana are mentioned, and Monsignor Darcy, the priest is idealised but the emerging picture is of relapse and "all Gods dead" except Mammon. Its almost a cynic's presentation: Chevalier O'Keefe had one weakness -- women, "he was enormously susceptible to all sorts and conditions of women..... He was made utterly miserable for twenty years by a series of women who hated him, used him, bored him, aggravated him, sickened him, spent his money, made a fool of him -- in brief, as the world has it, loved him."[1] He decided to "rescue himself from all these drains" so joined the St. Voltaire's monastery and entered the Tower of Chastity. As he gazed at the winding road, vineyards, fields and trees, he saw a peasant girl, Therese adjust her garter. He leaned so far out that when a stone broke loose he fell head over heels and broke his neck and vows. Being suspected of suicide, he was not buried but tumbled into the field "where he improved the soil for many years afterwards". They became adept at fooling the deity, and prayed immediately after all crimes "until eventually prayer and crime became indistinguishable." If a safe fell on them, they cried, "My God" thinking that was proof that belief was rooted deep in the human breast.

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1. F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Beautiful and Damned, pp.89-90.

Socialism was thought to be a panacea but in vain. Though it was characteristic of the Jazz Age that it had no interest in politics but there is cynicism regarding that too:

> The litter of that incredible pigsty.... Those glorified proletarians babbling blandly to the nation the ideas of high school seniors! Little men with copybook ambitions who by mediocrity had thought to emerge from mediocrity into the lustreless and unromantic heaven of a government by the people -- and the best, the dozen shrewd men at the top, egotistical and cynical, were content to lead this choir of white ties and wire collar buttons in a discordant and amazing hymn, compounded of a vague confusion between wealth as a reward of virtue and wealth as a proof of vice, and continued cheers for God, the Constitution, and The Rocky Mountains.[2]

Sneer became the highest form of expression in "this land of Jazz" being born into which implied a "state of almost audible confusion." Fitzgerald was no exception to this

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2. Ibid., p.56.

rowdy lot and lived intensely the life of his times; at the same time, he was its greatest critic.

The fungus-growth of moral and social decay and degeneration is concealed beneath the facade the rosy, beguiling appearances of money as an economic reality, unfolding its sinister ramifications through symbolic manifestations. This was Fitzgerald's profound concern, as a serious social novelist. He functioned in his exclusive metier, as an artist, and in the particular social context of a distinctive American era that chastened and disciplined his sensibility to fathom his society -- not in the scintillating luminosity of money, the sheen and shimmer of its golden haze in which the age basked and buried its despairing sense of futility -- but in the rampant and raging corruption and corrupting powers of money in his contemporary society. He exercised an artist's severe critical objectivity in probing and plummeting the deeply flawed contemporary reality, and with a moralist's censure he indicted the age with an unrelenting disapprobation. It is thus in his theme of money that Fitzgerald adopts a different attitude to his social themes, more discriminating than that of his contemporaries, money not as a social fact, but money in its extended possibilities of social and cultural implications, wealth in its winding mazes stretching into all shades and complexes of post-industrial,

American affluent society in the inter-war period. This forms the very crux that determines the meaning and relevance of his social vision as well as the intrinsic worth and viable integrity of his art.

The American society during the Twenties and Thirties was in the throes of a tremendous social and moral crisis created by the emergence of enormous wealth with all its alluring and exciting possibilities: "The exclusive worship of the bitch-goddess success is our material disease." It has assumed mythical proportions and was "detached both from its material basis and from its human origins [and taken on] the power of infinite self-multiplication". It was desired and coveted by the good and the internal characters turning them into objects identified with money; they became dehumanised and depersonalised and could be inter-changed or bartered away. In an acquisitive society the see-saw struggle for supremacy leads to conflicts and attempts to annihilate others through betrayals; man begins to live a masked existence, in concealing nefarious designs through misleading surfaces where others can be dodged and allured into subjugation and surrender. However, his characters are in the hands of a malicious inexplicable evil, and fall victims to it but are broken not defeated. The age needed an artist, an apostle, a spokesman who could help the nation attain its emancipation. Fitzgerald stands in the vanguard

of the phalanx of novelists of the period who endeavoured to portray the socio-cultural scene with fervour. His view that evil emanated from the prevailing social system, unlike the existentialists who sought to establish that man is an isolated individual in an indifferent and hostile universe responsible for his own actions and to choose his own destiny, made him the foremost social thinker and artist of his age. The symbolism of money demonstrates Fitzgerald's belief that man gets into the maelstrom of social and economic evils by resorting to devious means to scramble up the social ladder. This in turn contaminates the environment, the entire psychological and moral ambience of an age that sinks into decadence and renders the ethos inconducive to the growth and development of those eternal verities and values that alone make social and moral excellence in life a worthy pursuit. This brings to mind W.B. Yeats:

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity.[3]

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3. W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming", Golden Treasury, p.545, ll.1-8.

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